Edited by
Mary Bryden and
Margaret Topping

Beckett's Proust/ Deleuze's Proust

Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust

Also by Mary Bryden

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PROUST'S GODS: Christian and Mythological Figures of Speech in the Works of Marcel Proust

Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust

Edited by

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In memory of Jérôme Cornette

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Abbreviations

AO	*Anti-Oedipus* (Gilles Deleuze)
AS	*The Accursed Share* (Georges Bataille)
BAP	*Beckett and Proust* (Nicholas Zurbrugg)
BH	*Beckett and Homoeroticism* (Peter Boxall)
BP	'Beckett, Proust and "Dream of Fair to Middling Women"' (Nicholas Zurbrugg)
BPT	'Boulez, Proust and Time' (Gilles Deleuze)
CI	*Cinema I* (Gilles Deleuze)
CII	*Cinema II* (Gilles Deleuze)
CC	*Critique et clinique* (Gilles Deleuze)
D	*Dialogues* (Gilles Deleuze)
DB	*La dernière bande* (Samuel Beckett)
DCCS	*Du côté de chez Swann* (Marcel Proust)
DJ	*Disjecta* (Samuel Beckett)
DR	*Différence et répétition* / *Difference and Repetition* (Gilles Deleuze)
ECC	*Essays Critical and Clinical* (Gilles Deleuze)
EP	*L'Epuisé* (Gilles Deleuze)
FNWB	'A Footnote to William Burroughs's Article "Beckett and Proust"' (Nicholas Zurbrugg)
G	*En attendant Godot* / *Waiting for Godot* (Samuel Beckett)
HD	*Happy Days* (Samuel Beckett)
HS	'He Stuttered' (Gilles Deleuze)
IM	*The Image of Man* (George L. Mosse)
KLT	*Krapp's Last Tape* (Samuel Beckett)
LP	*La Prisonnière* (Marcel Proust)
LTR	*Le Temps retrouvé* (Marcel Proust)
LV	*Le Livre à venir* (Maurice Blanchot)
M	*Masochism* (Gilles Deleuze)
ML	*Molloy* (Samuel Beckett)
MP	*Mille Plateaux* (Gilles Deleuze)
MT	*On the Marionette Theatre* (Heinrich von Kleist)
MY	*Murphy* (Samuel Beckett)
N	*Negotiations* (Gilles Deleuze)
NE	*The Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle)
OB	*Organs without Bodies* (Slavoj Zizek)

P	*Proust* (Samuel Beckett)
PBN	*Proust, Beckett and Narration* (James Reid)
PLB	*Le Pli: Leibniz et le baroque* (Gilles Deleuze)
PJ	*Punch and Judy* (George Speaight)
PP	*Proust palimpseste* (Gérard Genette)
PS	*Proust et les signes* / *Proust and Signs* (Gilles Deleuze)
RB	1931 lecture notes on Gide and Racine (Rachel Burrows)
RSB	*Rencontre avec Samuel Beckett* (Charles Juliet)
RTP	*A la recherche du temps perdu* / *Remembrance of Things Past* (Marcel Proust)
SAG	*Sodom and Gomorrah* (Marcel Proust)
SG	*Sodome et Gomorrhe* (Marcel Proust)
SLT	*In Search of Lost Time* (Marcel Proust)
TF	*The Fold* (Gilles Deleuze)
TH	*Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God and the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil* (G.W. Leibniz)
TP	*A Thousand Plateaus* (Gilles Deleuze)
TPS	*The Prisoner* (Marcel Proust)
TWS	*The Way by Swann's* (Marcel Proust)
WBBP	'Beckett and Proust' (William Burroughs)

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Introduction

Margaret Topping and Mary Bryden

> *A la recherche du temps perdu* est le roman de l'entre-deux, pas de la contradiction résolue et de la synthèse dialectique, mais de la symétrie boiteuse ou défectueuse, du déséquilibre et de la disproportion, du faux pas [...]. Dans l'intervalle du roman et de la critique, entre la littérature et la philosophie, toute l'oeuvre et tout dans l'oeuvre est mixte, hybride, intermédiaire. C'est pourquoi Proust a déconcerté les lecteurs et les déconcerte toujours.[1]
>
> [*In Search of Lost Time* is the novel of the 'in between', not of resolute contradiction and dialectic synthesis, but of a clumsy or faulty symmetry, of imbalance and disproportion, of *faux pas* [...]. In the space between novel and criticism, between literature and philosophy, the entire work and everything in the work is mixed, hybrid, intermediate. This is why Proust disconcerted his readers and continues to disconcert them (tr. eds)].

Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust situates the French novelist Marcel Proust (1871–1922) between the Irish playwright and novelist Samuel Beckett (1906–89) and the French philosopher and cultural critic Gilles Deleuze (1925–95). Proust's 'roman de l'entre-deux' [in-between novel], as Antoine Compagnon has described *A la recherche du temps perdu* [*In Search of Lost Time*], provides the pivot, in this volume, on which Beckett and Deleuze balance their positions, constantly shifting in relation to Proust and to each other. Proust, the quintessential 'écrivain de l'entre-deux' thus becomes here an 'écrivain entre deux', as is attested by his presence in, and in the spaces created by the reader between, Beckett's and Deleuze's work. All three of these highly influential writers have attracted

sustained critical attention, but by situating Proust as the 'entre-deux' figure between them in this volume, new insights emerge into their aesthetic, literary, and philosophical affinities and the possible influences that link them.

These affinities are many and complex. As highlighted below, both Beckett and Deleuze wrote monographs on Proust, first published in 1931 and 1964 respectively. Visual and sonic phenomena also resonate throughout the writing of Proust and Beckett, while their fusion in the televisual and cinematic was a recurrent preoccupation of Deleuze, who not only produced a study of Beckett's television plays, *L'Epuisé*, but also included analysis of Beckett's only work for cinema, *Film*, in his *Cinéma I*. This volume thus opens up a space of debate and negotiation between the three writers, covering textual, visual, sonic and performative phenomena, as well as including provocative and imaginative speculation – most notably in Jérôme Cornette's epilogue – as to how Proust might have responded to Deleuze and Beckett. It celebrates the intersection of literature, philosophy and cultural theory within a framework both interdisciplinary and interaesthetic.

In travelling between writers, aesthetic media and disciplines, the volume offers new ways of seeing. As Proust says, '[l]e seul véritable voyage, [. . .], ce ne serait pas d'aller vers de nouveaux paysages, mais d'avoir d'autres yeux, de voir l'univers avec les yeux d'un autre, de cent autres, de voir les cent univers que chacun d'eux voit, que chacun d'eux est' ['[t]he only real journey, [...], would be to travel not towards new landscapes, but with new eyes, to see the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to see the hundred universes that each of them can be, or can see'].[2] It consists in defamiliarizing the familiar in ways that are suggestively echoed in Deleuze's concept of 'deterritorialization'.[3] As he proposes in *Dialogues*:

> Nous devons être bilingue même en une seule langue, nous devons avoir une langue mineure à l'intérieur de notre langue, nous devons faire de notre propre langue un usage mineur [. . .]. Non pas parler comme un Irlandais ou un Roumain dans une autre langue que la sienne, mais au contraire parler dans *sa langue* à soi comme un étranger.[4]
>
> [We must be bilingual even in a single language, we must have a minor language within our own language, we must make use of our own language in a minor way [. . .]. Not speak like an Irishman or a Romanian in a language other than one's own, but on the contrary to speak in *one's own language* like a foreigner].

It is in the space and experience of linguistic 'deterritorialization' that, according to Deleuze, the writer discovers his/her own voice. A fresh vision, a new health emerge from this sensitivity to the 'otherness' of language, to the ways in which it may be stretched, twisted, reformed from dispersed fragments into new mosaics. After all, 'la santé comme littérature, comme écriture, consiste à inventer un peuple qui manque'.[5] [Health, like literature and like writing, consists in inventing a missing people]. Familiar tropes, conventional perceptions are reinvigorated through the would-be writer's attentive 'eavesdropping' on this 'langue mineure' [minor language]. Citing Proust, the pivotal 'voice' in this volume, Deleuze tracks the way in which literature can trace within language 'une sorte de langue étrangère, qui n'est pas une autre langue, ni un patois retrouvé, mais un devenir-autre de la langue, une minoration de cette langue majeure, un délire qui l'emporte, une ligne de sorcière qui s'échappe du système dominant' (*CC*, p.15) [a kind of foreign language, which is neither another language nor a rediscovered dialect, but a becoming-other of language, a minorization of this major language, a delirium carrying it off, a sorcerer's line taking flight from the dominant system].

For Proust, a consummate weaver of words into surprising juxtapositions, incongruous but apt analogies, reinvented clichés and a poeticized prose, the pastiches of Flaubert, Sainte-Beuve, Maeterlinck, Michelet and others that he wrote in the first decade of the twentieth century, along with the translations of Ruskin that also date from this period,[6] represent a dynamic process of 'deterritorialization'. Through this process, Proust came to distinguish that part of the minor language within his own language which was the clamorous influence of others' style and vision from that born of his own attunement to, and unique blend of, linguistic and perceptual 'otherness'. Echoes of Flaubert, Sainte-Beuve, Ruskin or Michelet continue to reverberate even through Proust's mature writing, but by 'othering' these echoes – through contractions, expansions, shifts in tone, register or context – Proust made them his own.

More than 20 years after Proust wrote his *Pastiches*, four years after the publication of the final volume of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Samuel Beckett's monograph on Proust appeared in 1931. Proust's novel is at once the *raison d'être* of Beckett's essay and a vehicle for exploring Beckett's own aesthetic and epistemological preoccupations, as Mary Bryden's chapter explores, in negotiation with the divergent reflections of William Burroughs. Proust becomes Beckett's Proust, a Proust 'othered' by the Irish writer's subjective meditations on him. And yet this defamiliarized Proust, in relation to whom Beckett's own writing voice is

shaped, will continue to pulse through Beckett's own 'langue mineure' [minor language], its spectre present, as Adam Watt's chapter on 'Murphy's madeleine' uncovers, in the variously raw, irreverent and/or comic re-imaginings of Proust's imagery in the work of this 'lexical magpie' dating from the 1930s.[7] Moreover, the focus of this magpie may be ontological as much as lexical, as we see, for example, in the rehearsals of abandonment, loss and death characteristic of Proustian pain that Clark Lunberry detects as echoes in Beckett's *En attendant Godot*. In the realm of the aesthetic, too, Michael Maier's chapter examines not only how Beckett sets in opposition to the vanities of societal life the autonomous world of art, but also how Beckett continued to resonate with Proust by means of musical dialogue.

Almost 40 years after the publication of the final volume of the *Recherche*, over 30 years after the appearance of Beckett's *Proust*, the philosopher Gilles Deleuze offers a further exegesis of Proust's novel in the form of his *Proust et les signes* of 1964, a text which will, as Philippe Mengue's chapter explores, implement significant and often neglected transformations through its successive editions. *Proust et les signes* represents an exposition of Deleuze's own thought as much as of Proust's. As critics have suggested, Deleuze's interpretation of Proust is as much self-reflective monologue as it is speculative dialogue. Indeed, Joe Hughes proposes in his chapter in this volume that Deleuze's handling of Proust is 'actively manipulative, [. . .] taking Proust from behind and fathering a monstrous offspring'. His theory of signs, argues Hughes, 'derives from a theory of the interpreting or affected subject, and not, as Deleuze claimed in the "Preface to the Complete text", from the "signs as presented in *In Search of Lost Time*" (PS, p.ix). [. . .] The question [thus] becomes: Whose subject is it? Proust's or Deleuze's?'. The aesthetic and philosophical syntax and lexicon of Deleuze's Proust nonetheless comes to suffuse the philosopher's own 'langue mineure' [minor language] as he continues his engagement with Proust through later editions of *Proust et les signes*.

These opening reflections have begun to highlight the interweaving threads which, like the spider's web that Deleuze evokes at the end of *Proust et les signes* as a metaphor to express the construction of the *Recherche*, link Proust, Beckett and Deleuze in shifting relationships of unity and multiplicity, sameness and difference.[8]

The works collected in the volume offer nuanced analyses of the multiple threads that compose this web. To attempt to summarize them would be to reduce the intricacies of thought of both writers and critics. Our intention here is therefore to suggest areas of affinity, moments when Proust, Beckett and Deleuze meet either in momentary ricochets or

in sustained dialogue. These moments may be situated within the boundaries of the different Parts into which the volume is structured, but they also cut across the realms of 'Reading', 'Visual, Cinematic and Sonic', and 'Bodily' Encounters. In staging a series of 'encounters' within the volume, the aim is to imply a 'meeting' between the three writers that may generate dialogue but does not erase the possibility of tension or rebound, while the different modes of encounter into which the volume is organized reflect the recurrent preoccupations that establish transversal lines linking Proust, Beckett and Deleuze. 'Reading Encounters' looks both inwards to Deleuze's philosophical reading of the *Recherche* in *Proust et les signes* as a system of signs, and outwards to the mediating presence of others' work in and through that of our trio of writers. See, for example, Anthony Uhlmann's chapter, which outlines the Platonic and Leibnizian background for a discussion that confronts the problem of how to image thought in terms productive of new horizons for thinking.

'Visual, Cinematic and Sonic Encounters' draws in not only reflections on how Deleuze's analysis of cinema in *Cinéma I & II* may be applied to Beckett and Proust, but also film adaptation and such sonic phenomena as musical communication and the multiple sounds produced by language when 'othered' by Proust and Beckett through neologism, lyrical amplification, stuttering and silence. Finally, 'Bodily Encounters' provides a means of uniting discussions of sexuality, domination and control with explorations of aesthetic influence in the construction of the body as metaphor in Beckett and Proust.

As one might expect, such characteristically Proustian themes and figures as time, metaphor, epiphany and desire permeate the volume, but these also acquire new inflections through their juxtaposition to Beckett's and Deleuze's thought and aesthetic vision. For instance, while critical commentary on Proustian time has emphasized the centrality of involuntary memory as a form of temporal and spiritual transcendence, Clark Lunberry's chapter, which pivots on the seemingly mundane action of removing boots that is replayed in both the *Recherche* and *En attendant Godot* (by Estragon, Marcel's grandmother and, later, Marcel himself), uncovers not only hints of a reinvented Proustian 'langue mineure' [minor language] in Beckett, but also offers a poignant and 'vivid installation of time itself' in which characters are confronted, not with a vision of otherworldliness, but with the 'morbid theatre of the mortal body'.[9] The often overlooked interdependence in Proust of bodily experience and the transcendent worlds of the mind and creation thus emerges through this critical dialogue with Beckett.

Investigation into the webs of metaphorical hints and reminiscences that spin their way through the three writers likewise uncovers new points of intersection: Margaret Topping, for example, traces the image of puppet theatre through Proust, via Deleuze (and, briefly, Beckett), to imply a common preoccupation with questions of agency and subjecthood (whether of writers or characters), ritual and spontaneity, beauty and mechanical reproduction, beneath quite distinct aesthetic and philosophical agendas. The centrality of the human body as a site of both carnivalesque celebration and helpless abjection in this discussion is elaborated in unsuspected directions through the analyses of desire offered by Ian Pace, who foregrounds the performative roles of desiring machines within social collectivities, and Jennifer Jeffers who uncovers a challenge to normative constructions of masculinity in both Proust and Beckett. Traversing all of these moments of encounter is the epiphany of the Proustian creator whose gift is ultimately to offer his readers a lens through which to view themselves. 'Ils ne seraient pas, selon moi, mes lecteurs', he writes, 'mais les propres lecteurs d'eux-mêmes' (*RTP*, IV, p.610) [they would not, in my opinion, be my readers, but the readers of themselves]. This volume is testimony to the multiplicity of lenses on the *Recherche* that are uncovered through the mediation of Beckett and Deleuze.

Yet the tones that are common to the 'langue mineure' [minor language] of all three writers also extend beyond these very Proustian accents, for what emerges from the confluence of ideas enabled by the present volume are patterns of repetition and return in the works of Proust, Beckett and Deleuze that centre on such questions as: seeing and being seen; becoming and processes; art and communication or the meeting of self and world; and the complex tensions between unity and multiplicity, expansion and exhaustion, whether of style, possibilities or meaning.

For Proust, Beckett and Deleuze, the processes of vision are at the core of their epistemological as much as aesthetic reflections. Garin Dowd's chapter considers the linked endeavours and apprenticeships of author (Proust), philosopher (Deleuze) and film-maker (Ruiz) in the task of adapting the *Recherche* for the screen, while Patrick ffrench seizes upon Proust's phrase 'un peu de temps à l'état pur' [a bit of time in the pure state] to discuss the achronological nature of the experience of involuntary memory, outside time-as-succession, in the context of the movement-image as distinct from the time-image. The problematizing of perspective and subjectivity identified in Proust by a number of contributors is developed, in particular, by Carol Murphy's Deleuzian application

of cinematic and kinetic modes of seeing to Proust and Beckett. The images projected by the magic lantern, ekphrastic portraits, quasi-cinematic representations of perceptual fields in motion, all imply shifts in viewpoint that oscillate between multiplication and convergence, thus allowing us, as Murphy points out, to see 'seeing'. Sight as a physical act and sight as 'vision' coalesce to imply the indeterminacy of perception and the elusiveness of any monolithic understanding or meaning. Physical sight may act as a trigger for insight, but the instinctive drive for transcendent meaning or enlightenment may remain tantalizingly out of reach: Proust's intradiegetical narrator and Beckett's Estragon may be 'staring sightlessly'.[10]

Cutting across this search for meaning is a tension, common to discussions of all three writers, between the idea of the artist as embodying a unique creative vision on the one hand, and the impersonal drive of creation as reflected in the theories of Deleuze on the other. James Reid points out that, in a Deleuzian reading of Proust, the differences that individualize the work of art do not refer to anything beyond that work, not even the author's individuality; they constitute, rather, a formal, virtual web of textual differences. As Carol Murphy also notes, the intensities or 'haecceities', to use Deleuze's term, that play themselves out in Proust's and Beckett's writing, determine style as rhythms of difference and repetition, as cadence, motion and emotion moving through the text in 'blocks of becomings of affects and percepts'.[11] Yet alongside these Deleuzian approaches are essays that emphasize the distinctiveness of the artist's vision and of his/her own individual style. In *La Prisonnière*, Proust's intradiegetical narrator meditates anxiously on the existence of a unique creative 'personality' that defines Vinteuil's or Wagner's work (*RTP*, III, pp.664–8) and ultimately embraces, as does Proust himself, a vision of artistic creation based on the artist's unique perception as it is embodied in the 'anneaux nécessaires d'un beau style' (*RTP*, IV, p.468) [the necessary rings of a beautiful style]. To what extent, therefore, is Deleuze's Proust reconcilable with Proust's would-be artist, the narrator of the *Recherche*, who in *La Prisonnière* concludes that the artist is not a workmanlike producer of text or music, but a distinctive, determining creator (*RTP*, III, p.767)?

One response may lie in the recognition of openness, multiplicity and constant 'becoming' of meaning that lies at the centre of all three writers' work as it continues to resonate in the minds of their readers. From a range of different focal points, a role of co-creativity is ascribed to the readers of all three in a number of the contributions to this volume, including that of Christopher Drohan. Moreover, the problematics of

communication for the artist and the fundamental alterity of the world as confronted by the self remain haunting presences throughout Proust's, Beckett's and Deleuze's work, as they do throughout the volume, examined, for instance, in Erika Fülöp's explorations of how the processes of communication between self and other, between writer and reader, are inevitably mediated. The result is an ongoing tension between unity and multiplicity, closure and a lack of closure, expansion and exhaustion. Yet, what remains constant for all three, and what emerges throughout the essays included in this volume, is the conviction that 'la vraie vie, la vie enfin découverte et éclaircie, la seule vie par conséquent pleinement vécue, c'est la littérature' (*RTP*, IV, p.474) ['Real life, life finally uncovered and clarified, the only life in consequence lived to the full, is literature' (*SLT*, VI, p.204)].

The present volume originated in a conference which attracted the participation of international specialists working on Proust, Beckett and Deleuze, and which took place in Beckett's Centenary Year, 2006. Testimony to the new and significant affinities that emerge out of staging an encounter between these three writers, the dialogues initiated at that conference have continued. The essays collected here demonstrate how Proust – our 'écrivain entre deux' – continues to capture the imagination of scholars, creative writers, philosophers, musicians, visual artists and film-makers globally. Through these richly varied contributions, a sliding scale of aesthetic and philosophical commonalities and *décalages* [slippages] comes to light. The volume as a whole also aims to create a forum for the reader to speculate on the ways in which Beckett's Proust may also be Deleuze's Proust. As our collective conversations continue, a Deleuzian line of flight produces new becomings for the intersections between literature and philosophy, between the work of Proust, Beckett and Deleuze.

The international line-up of contributors to this volume has meant that there is variation as to whether the French or the English version of given works has been consulted. The practice of the editors has been to respect individual choice, but to provide an English translation of any French passages. One exception to this is the Epilogue, which stands apart as a piece of creative writing in its own right, and where French style and inflections are paramount.

Notes

1. Antoine Compagnon, *Proust entre deux siècles* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1989), p.13.
2. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 4 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1987–89), III, p.762. Hereafter referred to as *RTP*. The English translation is taken from the following edition: *In Search of Lost Time*, ed. Christopher Prendergast, tr. various, 6 vols, (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2002), V, p.237. Hereafter referred to as *SLT.*
3. The Deleuzo-Guattarian notion of deterritorialization is explored at length in their *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie* and elsewhere. See Vol.I: *L'Anti-Oedipe* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1972) and Vol. II: *Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1980).
4. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977), p.11. All translations of this and other texts by Deleuze are the editors' own.
5. Gilles Deleuze, 'La Littérature et la vie', in *Critique et clinique* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1993), pp.11–17 [p.14]. Hereafter referred to as *CC*.
6. These are collected in the following edition: Marcel Proust, *Contre Sainte-Beuve, précédé de Pastiches et mélanges, et suivi de Essais et articles*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).
7. The phrase was used by Mary Bryden in a conference paper entitled 'Reverberating Inwards: Beckett Reading Proust', delivered at the 'Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust' conference held at Cardiff University.
8. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, 2nd edn (Paris, PUF, 1970), pp.218–19.
9. See Lunberry, infra., p.121.
10. See Lunberry, infra., pp.117–27.
11. See Murphy, infra., p.140.

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Part I
Reading Encounters

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1

The Embarrassment of Meeting: Burroughs, Beckett, Proust (and Deleuze)

Mary Bryden

> 'It seems to me that Proust and Beckett are at opposite ends of the spectrum. [...] I am very much closer to Proust than to Beckett'. William Burroughs.[1]

This observation by William Burroughs, from a paper on Beckett and Proust, formed part of a series of lectures he gave at the University of Kansas in the early 1980s. Burroughs began the lecture with a recollection of visiting Beckett in Berlin, where the latter was staying while directing at the Schiller-Theater. Having been provided with an introduction to Beckett by John Calder, their mutual publisher, Burroughs called on Beckett in company with four others, including Allen Ginsberg and Susan Sontag. The short visit seems not to have been a success. The party had brought along a bottle of whisky, which Beckett duly sipped along with them. But the meeting was characterized by courtesy rather than by conviviality. As the visitors rose to go, Beckett shook hands with them. 'Clearly', recalled Burroughs, 'he had not the slightest desire to see any of them ever again. You could imagine him turning in disinterest from an extraterrestrial' (*WBBP*, p.31).

It is probable that Beckett's self-containment stemmed from lack of small talk rather than lack of interest. As his biographer James Knowlson remarks of one of Beckett's visits to Berlin in 1976: 'Everyone seemed to be in Berlin while Beckett was there. Even in his seventies, he was still shy at meeting new people and nervous beforehand. First meetings with him could be excruciatingly embarrassing'.[2] In this case, this was not even Burroughs' first meeting with Beckett. They had met previously at a restaurant in Paris, as Burroughs reminded Beckett. However, this encounter had been no less uncomfortable, with an uneasy discussion

taking place on the subject of writing techniques. 'On this occasion', Burroughs recalled, 'we had argued about the cut-ups, and I had no wish to renew the argument' (*WBBP*, p.28).[3]

It is unclear why Burroughs chose to lecture subsequently on the particular pairing of Beckett and Proust. What does emerge from his lecture is an overwhelming self-alignment with Proust, to the detriment of Beckett. The extent to which this derived from Burroughs' personal disappointment at not being able to connect with Beckett is interesting, but is not our concern here. The theoretical grounds on which he sets up Beckett in contradistinction with Proust (and thence with himself) are, however, illuminating. Among them, I shall be mainly concerned here with the intersecting areas of time, memory and character.

For Burroughs, 'Proust is principally concerned with time. Beckett is virtually timeless. [...] There is no time in Beckett. Take *Waiting for Godot*. The characters can wait forever. Godot never comes. [...] Proust is all names and all time. There is no Memory in Beckett' (*WBBP*, p.29). Deleuze would, of course, dispute that Proust's principal concern is with time and memory. While acknowledging the participation of temporal structures in the interpretation of signs, he states in *Proust et les signes* that:

> L'essentiel, dans la Recherche, ce n'est pas la mémoire et le temps, mais le signe et la vérité. L'essentiel n'est pas de se souvenir, mais d'apprendre. Car la mémoire ne vaut que comme une faculté capable d'interpréter certains signes, le temps ne vaut que comme la matière ou le type de telle ou telle vérité.[4]
>
> [The essential thing, in the Search, is not memory and time, but sign and truth. The essential thing is not to remember, but to learn. For memory serves only as a faculty capable of interpreting certain signs; time serves only as the material or type of such and such a truth].

Hence, insofar as time and memory are, in this reading, not the end but the means, 'La Recherche est tournée vers le futur, non vers le passé' (*PS*, p.10) [The Search is turned towards the future, not the past]. Further, to Burroughs' assertion that 'Proust is all names', Deleuze would counter that Proustian names are not orderly, unifying identities, but gatherings of multiple viewpoints. What matters is not so much the being who occupies a given narrative position, but the passage of signs which they unleash or facilitate:

> Les personnages de la Recherche n'ont d'importance que pour autant qu'ils émettent des signes à dechiffrer, sur un rythme du temps plus

> ou moins profond. La grand-mère, Françoise, Mme de Guermantes, Charlus, Albertine: chacun ne vaut que par ce qu'il nous apprend. (*PS*, p.111)
>
> [The characters of the Search are only important inasmuch as they give out signs for decipherment, over a more or less deep-seated rhythm of time. The grandmother, Françoise, Mme de Guermantes, Charlus, Albertine: the value of each is based only upon what they impart to us].

The *Recherche*, Deleuze contends, is not about a series of loves but about seriality within loves, linked with subjective variations in jealousy and mood, 'd'une Albertine à l'autre, puisque Albertine a des âmes multiples et de multiples visages' (*PS*, p.87) [from one Albertine to another, since Albertine has multiple spirits and multiple faces]. In this respect, Deleuze's analysis has important correspondences with that undertaken three decades earlier by Beckett: 'Thus is established the *pictorial* multiplicity of Albertine that will duly evolve into a *plastic* and moral multiplicity'.[5] Deleuze leans rather more than does Beckett towards the subjective input of the sufferer into the Albertine-idea, while proceeding nevertheless to broaden it out into the 'transsubjective reality'[6] of the love serial. For Beckett, what might be called the 'Albertinian' multiplicity holds sway as 'a turmoil of objective and immanent contradictions' (*P*, p.47). If we here rejoin, though, the notion of the 'Proustian name', Beckett the Proustian analyst may also be seen as refuting Burroughs' suggestion, when he contends that 'the Name is an example of a barbarous society's primitivism, and as conventionally inadequate as "Homer" or "sea"' (*P*, pp.47–8).

For Burroughs, Proustian names accord both specificity and stability to a set of characters within given environments: 'Proust's characters are firmly rooted in place and time. They are French high society: Dukes and Barons who all have long essential names. They are their names' (*WBBP*, p.29). If, then, a character can in some sense 'be' their name, how may one deal with Beckett's *The Unnamable*? The answer is to assert, as Burroughs does, that a work containing no names has no characters: 'There are no characters in Beckett. Whereas, well, in Proust's work people immediately think of characters' (*WBBP*, p.33). Namelessness is for Burroughs an insuperable obstacle, as is the absence of an explanation to account for anonymity: '*The Unnamable*? Who didn't name it?' (*WBBP*, p.31). In an interview with Nicholas Zurbrugg in 1983, Burroughs comments further on his difficulty in tolerating a sustained exploration of transient or multiple subjectivity. Despite admiring *Watt*, *Murphy*, *Molloy*,

he relates: 'When I came to *The Unnamable* I just couldn't follow him somehow, he just couldn't hold my attention. I know what he's talking about, that when you get in far enough there are different organisms, different interests, in the same body. But he wound up much too static'.[7]

Paradoxically, then, Burroughs' criticism of the mobile identity to be found in Beckett (and particularly in *The Unnamable*) centres around its 'static' quality, in contrast with the analysis provided by Deleuze and Guattari:

> Le sujet [...] n'est pas lui-même au centre, occupé par la machine, mais sur le bord, sans identité fixe, toujours décentré, *conclu* des états par lesquels il passe. Ainsi les boucles tracées par L'Innommable, [...] avec pour états Murphy, Watt, Mercier, etc.[8]
>
> [The subject [...] is not itself at the centre, which is occupied by the machine, but on the periphery, without fixed identity, always off-centre, *decided* by the stages through which it passes. Hence the loops traced out by The Unnamable, [...] with Murphy, Watt, Mercier, etc. as stages].

It is probable that both Proust and Beckett would have recognized this travelling viewpoint as having more validity for their respective writing projects than the notion of a fixed set of individual characteristics. Evoking Schopenhauer in the context of art being the contemplation of the world independently from reason, Beckett proceeds to say of Proust: 'In this connection Proust can be related to Dostoievski, who states his characters without explaining them. It may be objected that Proust does little else but explain his characters. But his explanations are experimental and not demonstrative. He explains them in order that they may appear as they are – inexplicable' (*P*, p.87).

At the time of writing his *Proust*, this was an important idea for Beckett. While preparing the lectures on French literature which he was to give at Trinity College Dublin from Autumn 1930 onwards, Beckett was immersing himself in a kind of literary pathfinding which was to have an impact on both his teaching and his own writing. Using the resource of the detailed lecture notes[9] on Gide and Racine taken in 1931 by Rachel Burrows, one of Beckett's students, it is possible to trace that Beckett had taken careful account of Gide's collection of pieces on Dostoievski, and, in particular, Gide's 'allocution lue au Vieux-Colombier', given in 1921, on the occasion of the centenary of Dostoievski's birth. It is in this short piece that Gide deploys a telling contrast between Dostoievski and Balzac on the grounds of their characterizations. For Gide, Dostoievski's

characters are not depicted, but rather paint themselves, in an ongoing and ever-unfinished portrait:

> Ses principaux personnages restent toujours en formation, toujours mal dégagés de l'ombre. Je remarque en passant combien profondément il diffère par là de Balzac dont le souci principal semble être toujours la parfaite conséquence du personnage.[10]
>
> [His principal characters always remain under construction, never emerging clearly from the shadow. I note in passing how profoundly he differs in that respect from Balzac, whose main concern always seems to be with the perfect outcome of the character].

In the Rachel Burrows lecture notes may be found not only Beckett's delivery of this idea (with the phrase 'mal dégagés de l'ombre' heavily underlined), but also the summary: 'No explanations in Dostoievski' (*RB*, p.28).

This attachment to inexplicability – indeed, to the lack of even a motivation to explain – provides part of the basis for Beckett's linking of Dostoievski, Gide and Proust. Indeed, the distancing from an absolute basis for character, in favour of a relative one – a 'provisional momentary expression of person', as Burrows notes it down (*RB*, p.25) – is seen by Beckett as being an ambition of Gide which is actually achieved by Proust. Beckett asserts that, where Bergson insists on absolute time, Proust denies it: 'For Proust it's a function of too many things – local but not absolute reality' (*RB*, p.9). The Burrows lecture notes reveal that Beckett outlined as a feature of the Proustian text that 'an idea only expresses mood of second – a second's value. 5 o'clock Thursday idea etc.' (*RB*, p.25). This notion of relativism enables links to be made between time, ideas and character in a way that is quite distinct from the stable referential edifice Burroughs presents as being characteristic of Proust's narrative. For Beckett, it is his multiplication of time itself that allows Proust to avoid facile connectivity. As he writes in *Proust*: 'Proust's chronology is extremely difficult to follow, the succession of events spasmodic, and his characters and themes, although they seem to obey an almost insane inward necessity, are presented and developed with a fine Dostoievskian contempt for the vulgarity of a plausible concatenation' (*P*, pp.81–2).

Given Beckett's attunement to Proustian temporal multiplicity, what of Burroughs' assertion, cited earlier, that 'there is no time in Beckett. Take *Waiting for Godot*'? There is indeed no overarching time in *Godot*, no pre-installed horological or chronogrammatical machinery, no method

of securing and affirming the residue of memory. When Vladimir asks Pozzo precisely when his companion Lucky went dumb, Pozzo's outburst seems to confirm this:

> Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day like any other day, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you?[11]

The fact that Pozzo also appears to lose his watch in the course of the play might seem to strengthen Burroughs' diagnosis.

Yet surely what is lacking in *Godot* is not time, but access to independent verifying processes. Time is not *punctual*: it does not occupy a series of points in space, and therefore cannot provide a basis for the archiving of experience. One could nevertheless argue that *Godot*'s characters are utterly saturated in time, that the play is nothing but time and its infinite speeds and slownesses. A Deleuzian perspective allows us to see time pervading the play as a series of durations. Deleuze points out that cinema montage facilitates the understanding of time as it really is – not as a framework viewed from a unified perspective, but as a flow of moments and becomings. In this context, Claire Colebrook observes: 'There is not a world that contains time; there is a flow of time, which produces "worlds" or durations. Time is a virtual whole of divergent durations: different rhythms or pulsations of life which we can think or intuit'.[12] The ageing Krapp in Beckett's play *Krapp's Last Tape* records just such a swarm of apparently coincident but divergent durations, when describing a scene in the park: 'I sat on for a few moments with the ball in my hand and the dog yelping and pawing at me. [*Pause*.] Moments. Her moments, my moments. [*Pause*.] The dog's moments'.[13]

Though moments may apparently intersect, they are not anchored within a shared and stable temporality. Rather, they participate in differing viewpoints, differing modes and speeds of living time. This is an intensive living of time. Pozzo lives intensely the loss of his sight, and the awareness of his companion's dumbness, but does so devoid of connectivity with any external system of documentation. Time is of acute significance to him, as it is also to Winnie in *Happy Days*. Winnie cohabits with Willie in a restricted and complex sense. Isolated in her mound, and faced chronically with threats to her survival, she has developed skills in segmenting her day, in tailoring it to what might pass for its conclusion. When she sings her song, it marks a late stage in the day's advance, with

no guarantee that another day will ensue. Deleuze sums up aptly what is a closing ritual, but one which can be only a penultimate one:

> Il y a un temps pour les images, un bon moment où elles peuvent paraître, s'insérer, rompre la combinaison des mots et le flux des voix, il y a une heure pour les images, quand Winnie sent qu'elle peut chanter l'Heure exquise, mais c'est un moment tout proche de la fin, une heure proche de la dernière.[14]
>
> [There is a time for images, an appropriate moment for them to appear, intervene, break the combination of words and the flux of voices; there is an hour for images, when Winnie feels that she may sing 'L'Heure exquise', but it is a moment very near to the end, an hour approaching the last].[15]

Earlier in *L'Epuisé*, Deleuze has already applied the notion of 'image', and its outreach, to Winnie's song, when he states: 'L'image est une petite ritournelle visuelle ou sonore, quand l'heure est venue: "l'heure exquise . . ."' (*EP*, p.72). [The image is a little visual or sonic refrain, when the time has come: 'the exquisite hour . . .']. For Deleuze, the image is not an object, but a process; as a refrain, it is not confined to the visual. Moreover, its occurrence is not fixed but negotiable. In *Happy Days*, Winnie sings her song at the moment of maximum interaction, when she finds herself being able to glimpse her usually invisible husband. This is also, however, a moment of maximum uncertainty and suspense in the play, providing a transit to a future of no less uncertainty. Has Willie arrived to kiss her, kill her, or simply to watch her?

In this respect, when Burroughs proceeds to develop his alienation from Beckett's work by asserting that 'there is no suspense in Beckett. Beckett is above suspense. There are no cliff-hangers at the end of each chapter' (*WBBP*, p.30), the observation seems at odds with many of the impulses traversing Beckett's texts. Willie constitutes a cliff-hanger (or at least a mound-hanger) at the end of *Happy Days*. Clov, dressed for departure and yet irresolute in its implementation at the end of *Endgame*, is another. If seen as a point of pause, from which multiple becomings (moods, actions, transformations) might take their course, suspense is infused into Beckett's work for stage and page. What Beckett does not supply is a nudge of time or circumstance, introduced to provoke a foreshortening of the horizon of becomings.

It is similarly difficult to sustain Burroughs' statement that 'there is no Memory in Beckett'. The fact that Burroughs ventures this opinion immediately after his statement that 'Proust is all names and all time'

might point towards particular properties of memory, in terms of factual recall. Certainly Beckett impregnates much of his work with awarenesses of failures of memory for words, dates, locations, and other specifics. The travellers in his early work exhibit an often humorous vagueness about the purpose and destination of their journeys, the names of their interlocutors, and even their own names.[16] Winnie forgets lines she once knew from her 'classics';[17] Krapp forgets the meaning of the word 'viduity' which he used in a tape recording decades before.[18] Yet deep and often searing memories of feelings, sights and experiences frequently rise to the surface, or simmer beneath it, in Beckett's work. Winnie savours the memory of romantic togetherness at the end of a ball: 'That day. (*Pause*.) The pink fizz. (*Pause*.) The flute glasses. (*Pause*.) The last guest gone. (*Pause*.)' (*HD*, p.78), as well as evoking the memories that will be held by little Mildred: 'Beginning in the womb, where life used to begin, Mildred has memories, she will have memories, of the womb, before she dies, the mother's womb' (*HD*, p.70). Burroughs goes on to suggest that 'Even *Krapp's Last Tape* has no memory in the usual sense of associative recall, but rather, a mechanical process set in motion by a jar or vibration: the closing of or opening of a door' (*WBBP*, p.29). Yet it could be argued that the very material and texture of *Krapp's Last Tape* is memory. Krapp's life is strung out between and by means of the recording and replaying of memory. What gives the play its depth is not a mechanical jolt, but a surge of affect associated with significant periods of interaction. Hence, the voice on the tape declares that the feel of the old, black, solid rubber ball which he took in his hand, moments after noting from the closing of a window blind that his mother had just died, will be felt 'in my hand, until my dying day' (*KLT*, p.60). Moreover, the play ends with the tape running on in silence as Krapp loses himself to the memory of a still summer's day when he lay in a punt with a former love whose thigh bore a scratch from gooseberry picking.

The discussion so far has focused on the problematics of sustaining the kind of broad-gauge differentiations between Proust and Beckett which Burroughs attempts to implement, especially when one places the discussion in a Deleuzian context, or in that of Beckett's own evolving responses to Proust and to his own project as a writer. Burroughs does, however, introduce an additional theme which is more productive, even if not, perhaps, in quite the way he intended. In what may or may not be a compliment to Beckett, Burroughs states that he is 'perhaps the purest writer who has ever written. There is nothing there but the writing itself' (*WBBP*, p.30). He goes on to set up the idea of a writing dynamic structured around a move ever inwards: 'It is all moving inward rather

than outward, inward to some final inwardness, some ultimate core. Just as the physicists progress from the atom to the nucleus, to smaller and smaller particles as they move inwards, so Beckett's range is always smaller and more precise' (*WBBP*, p.30). In this respect, he contrasts Beckett's orientation with that of Proust, who is said to have constructed 'high society puppets, bowing in and out of rooms and corridors and terraces and gardens – a phantom charade' (*WBBP*, p.30).

It is not difficult to find instances of an internal turn, within Beckett's writing, towards bare, stripped spaces, or spaces of darkness. However, there is no evidence that the motivation for this is a search for what Burroughs calls 'some ultimate core'. Indeed, it is in the *Proust* essay itself that Beckett relates 'the labours of poetical excavation' to 'the heart of the cauliflower or the ideal core of the onion'.[19] The fact that there is no such heart or core to be found within the layers does not invalidate the stripping process. In a revelatory interview with Charles Juliet in 1968, Beckett described the movement of writing as being like a blind and silent burrowing: 'Je suis comme une taupe dans une taupinière' [I am like a mole in a molehill] and 'L'écriture m'a conduit au silence' [Writing has led me to silence].[20]

It is notable that Beckett added in the interview with Juliet that he now read very little, finding it incompatible with the activity of writing. The Beckett who engaged closely with Proust in preparing for his delivery of the manuscript in autumn 1930, on the other hand, was one who was keenly attuned to textual movements from within to without, and vice versa. Beckett's own copy of the *Recherche* is held in Reading University Library, its annotations revealing the multi-layered and multi-directional[21] quality of his response to Proust. They show that he was alive to the echoes, refluxes and intermittencies in Proust's text, as well as to its transitional moments.[22] Beckett often underlines passages which speak about provisional or progressive understandings, as well as those relating to physical suffering, to the mortality of the human body, and to emotional disequilibrium.

Notably, in the light of Burroughs' comments, Beckett was attentive to both the immersive and the emersive qualities of Proust's text. When, in *Du côté de chez Swann*, the narrator describes his experience, while reading, of moving from the 'aspirations les plus profondément cachées en moi-même jusqu'à la vision tout extérieure de l'horizon'[23] [the aspirations which were the most deeply hidden within me to the purely external vision of the horizon], Beckett underlines the words 'du dedans au dehors' [from inner to outer] on the facing page. Yet he pencils in the margin of this description: 'first hopeful emersive tendency to be

replaced by immersive necessity'. As Beckett remarks in *Proust*, the movement from within to without represents in Proust 'a false movement of the spirit', since 'the only fertile research is excavatory, immersive, a contraction of the spirit, a descent' (*P*, p.65). Accordingly, 'the only possible spiritual development is in the sense of depth' (*P*, p.64).[24] In this instance, Beckett demonstrates, in response to the Proustian dilemma, that the outward-bound textual impulse which Burroughs identifies is not so unproblematically established.[25]

In analysing a selection from Burroughs' grid of contrasts between Proust and Deleuze, it has become apparent that over-schematization is rarely satisfactory. Such broad contrasts do, however, incite debate, as was no doubt their purpose, provoking further readings of the complex ways in which these writers intersect. Emphasizing his kinship with Proust, Burroughs takes every opportunity to distance himself from Beckett. Surprisingly, other commentators are drawn to affiliate Burroughs with Beckett. Among these are Deleuze and Guattari, who include both writers in their listing of 'schizo-book' creators: 'Est-ce notre faute si Lawrence, Miller, Kerouac, Burroughs, Artaud ou Beckett en savent plus sur la schizophrénie que les psychiatres et les psychanalystes?'[26] [Is it our fault if Lawrence, Miller, Kerouac, Burroughs, Artaud or Beckett know more about schizophrenia than psychiatrists and psychoanalysts?].

Surprisingly, given Burroughs' remarks about the edgy conversation he had had with Beckett about 'cut-ups', the composer Philip Glass even sees Burroughs and Beckett as closely allied in terms of this technique, as he described in an interview with me some years ago: 'What interested me particularly at that time [1960s] were the parallels I saw between Beckett and four other writers: William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, Allen Ginsberg, and Paul Bowles. [. . .] These four writers wanted to create a non-narrative literary form, and it seems to me that their experimentation with "cut-ups", with non-consecutive narrative, is very close to what Beckett is doing in *Play*, where he takes three monologues and intercuts them to form one story, fracturing the straight narrative form'.[27]

Yet, even while travelling towards what appears to be a greater degree of on-stage abstraction, Beckett has created in *Play* a trio of creatures whose tragedy lies in the fact that their roles and their speeches are inescapably theirs. Much as they would wish to elude them or swap them, to participate in a 'cut-up' which would accord them the opportunity of viewing the tangled knot of relationship from an unfamiliar perspective, the figures can never be interchangeable. Moreover, encased in urns with only their jabbering mouths visible, they are moored at that very intersection

which we discussed above, between immersion (in the covering urn) and emersion (endlessly rehearsing aloud their narrative of adultery). As such, there could hardly be a better visual and auditory image of Beckett's summary of Proust: 'Proust's creatures [. . .] are victims and prisoners. [. . .] There is no escape from yesterday because yesterday has deformed us, or been deformed by us. [. . .] We are not merely more weary because of yesterday, we are other, no longer what we were before the calamity of yesterday' (*P*, p.13).

Beckett was no unreserved admirer of Proust; moreover, in later years, he thought his essay on Proust 'pédant' (*RSB*, p.19) [pedantic], and resisted the idea of its being translated into French. Nevertheless, though Nicholas Zurbrugg sees Beckett's study as being 'the gloomiest of pictures of the Proustian vision',[28] it does represent, among accesses of exasperation, an intensity of engagement with its subject. The wedge that Burroughs drives between Proust and Beckett also illuminates by means of provoking reactive reflection. To attempt to draw together more broadly the respective enterprises of Proust and Beckett is, as Zurbrugg remarks at the outset, 'to undertake a critical odyssey which may well flounder, over and over again' (*BAP*, p.1). To flounder over and over again, then, will not only be desirable, but will also constitute a very Beckettian 'fail again. Fail better'.[29]

Notes

1. William Burroughs, 'Beckett and Proust', *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Vol.7, No.2 (Summer 1987), pp.28–31 [p.29]. Hereafter referred to as *WBBP*.
2. James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995), p.629.
3. Beckett's American publisher, Barney Rosset, was present at this encounter, and has also set down his memories of it, including Beckett's remark: 'That's not writing, that's plumbing'. See Barney Rosset, 'The Art of Publishing No.2', *Paris Review*, No.145 (Winter 1997), pp.299–331.
4. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: PUF, 1964), p.111. Hereafter referred to as *PS*.
5. Samuel Beckett, *Proust, and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: John Calder, 1987), p.47. Hereafter referred to as *P*.
6. See *PS*, pp.88–9.
7. Nicholas Zurbrugg, 'A Footnote to William Burroughs's Article "Beckett and Proust"', *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Vol.7, No.2 (Summer 1987), pp.32–3. Hereafter referred to as *FNWB*.
8. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Oedipe* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1972), p.27.
9. Trinity College Dublin MS MIC 60. Hereafter referred to as *RB*.
10. André Gide, *Dostoïevski* (Paris: Gallimard, 1923), p.73.

11. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (London: Faber, 1965), p.89.
12. Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.42.
13. Samuel Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape*, in *Collected Shorter Plays of Samuel Beckett* (London: Faber, 1984), pp.53–63 [p.60]. Hereafter referred to as *KLT*.
14. Gilles Deleuze, *L'Epuisé*, in Samuel Beckett, *Quad, et autres pièces pour la télévision* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1992), p.77. Hereafter referred to as *EP*.
15. All translations in this chapter are the author's own.
16. See, for instance, the narrator in *Molloy*: 'And suddenly I remembered my name, Molloy. My name is Molloy, I cried, all of a sudden, now I remember. [. . .] Is your mother's name Molloy too? said the sergeant. I thought it over. Your mother, said the sergeant, is your mother's – Let me think! I cried', Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*, in *The Beckett Trilogy* (London: Picador, 1979), p.23.
17. Winnie: 'What are those exquisite lines? [. . .] One loses one's classics. (*Pause*.) Oh not all. (*Pause*.) A part. (*Pause*.) A part remains'. Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days/Oh les beaux jours*, ed. J. Knowlson (London: Faber, 1978), p.74. Hereafter referred to as *HD*.
18. Krapp: '(*Reading from dictionary*.) State – or condition – of being – or remaining – a widow – or widower. (*Looks up. Puzzled*.) Being – or remaining?' (*KLT*, p.59).
19. For further discussion of this concept, see preface to John Pilling and Mary Bryden (eds), *The Ideal Core of the Onion: Reading Beckett Archives* (Reading: BIF, 1992), pp.v–vii.
20. Charles Juliet, *Rencontre avec Samuel Beckett* (Paris: Editions Fata Morgana, 1986), pp.19, 18. Hereafter referred to as *RSB*.
21. Beckett's system of cross-referencing demonstrates that he worked backwards as well as forwards, sometimes returning to seek out a passage prefiguring a later event. For example, in identifying what he saw as the key moments of revelation (which are marked with encircled marginal numerals), Beckett writes in the first volume, *Du côté de chez Swann*, by the side of the evocation of the hawthorn hedge, the words 'Revelation 5 prepared'. This revelation is not to appear until Volume 5. Similarly, Beckett notes in Volume 4 that a passage relating to the invisible birds in the trees of the Chantereine and Canteloup woods is repeated more or less word for word in Volume 10, though this time relating to the Chantepie forest.
22. The second largest number of annotations occur in the case of the opening volume, while the largest number attach to the final volume.
23. Marcel Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann* (Paris: Gallimard, 1919), p.124.
24. In this connection, Beckett will criticize Rainer Maria Rilke in a later review for being a phoney deep-sea diver, who needs to pop frequently to the surface for 'the gulp of disgust'. Samuel Beckett, '*Poems*. By Rainer Maria Rilke', *Disjecta*, ed. by Ruby Cohn (London: John Calder, 1983), pp.66–7 [p.66].
25. Burroughs does blur the distinction somewhat when he states that 'all experience is both objective and subjective' (*WBBP*, p.28), and that 'at some point inward becomes outward, and outward becomes inward. It's just a part of the spectrum' (*FNWB*, p.33). Nevertheless, he presents Beckett as gravitating more towards the inward-facing part of the spectrum, and Proust towards the outer-facing.
26. Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1990), p.37.

27. Mary Bryden, 'Beckett and Music: An Interview with Philip Glass', in Mary Bryden (ed.), *Samuel Beckett and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.191–4 [p.191].
28. Nicholas Zurbrugg, *Beckett and Proust* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988), p.120. Hereafter referred to as *BAP*.
29. Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho*, in *Nohow On* (London: Calder Publications, 1992), pp.101–28 [p.101].

2

The Search for Strange Worlds: Deleuzian Semiotics and Proust

Christopher M. Drohan

> When one reads, one likes to be transported into a new world.[1]
> Marcel Proust

In his first major semiotic work, *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze not only ignores the whole field of semiotics, but the entire history of the philosophy of the sign.[2] In a bold affront to both, he instead uses Proust's masterwork *In Search of Lost Time* as if it were some authority on signs and their concept. Nothing short of scandalously, Deleuze wrestles the sign away from analytic scholarship toward an existential theory that is consistent with his material realism.

Now, the semiotician knows that literature is full of signs. Saussure himself, the accredited founder of the discipline, called language 'a system of signs expressing ideas and hence comparable to writing'.[3] This concept, inherited from a long philosophic trend, idealizes the sign as a linguistic phenomenon and places the sign's truth within linguistic structure.[4]

Deleuze, on the other hand, approaches this history and discipline from a different angle. For him, the work of literature abounds in signs. Therefore, by analysing a text, we can trace the emergence of those signs both within the worlds of that book and before the readers of them. The question of the sign has been reversed: if signs are systems comparable to writing, literature will be full of systems of signs ripe for investigation. Different texts will use different sign systems or, as Deleuze will later call them, different 'regimes' of signs, complete with their own rules and limitations.[5]

Proust is rich material for such a study. The *Search* overflows with signs and sign systems, the manifestation of which is painstakingly detailed in the narrator's desperate attempts to uncover the truth of his past. Reading

Proust, one must question not only what the narrator is searching for, but also why he is searching in the first place. For if we take this search as seriously as Proust does, we see that 'the *Search* is not simply an effort of recall, an exploration of memory: search, *recherche*, is to be taken in the strong sense of the term, as we say "the search for truth"' (*PS*, p.3).

It is precisely because we do not know the 'truth' of a sign that it strikes us existentially as being more than just an object that we understand, but as something that we must investigate and spend time with in order to unravel its meaning. To get to the 'truth' of a sign and to know it, we must *apprentice* to that sign. We must ponder its relation to the world and to other signs. In fact, without signs we would not be able to learn at all, for:

> [l]earning is essentially concerned with *signs*. Signs are the object of a temporal apprenticeship, not of an abstract knowledge. To learn is first of all to consider a substance, an object, a being as if they emitted signs to be deciphered, interpreted. There is no apprentice who is not 'the Egyptologist' of something. One becomes a carpenter only by becoming sensitive to the signs of wood, a physician by becoming sensitive to the signs of disease. Vocation is always predestination with regard to signs. Everything which teaches us something emits signs, every act of learning is an interpretation of signs or hieroglyphs. Proust's work is based not on the exposition of memory, but on the apprenticeship to signs. (*PS*, p.4)

Already, with these notions of the sign as a 'search' and learning as an 'interpretation of signs', Deleuze has begun wrestling the sign away from analytic definitions of its phenomenon toward a pragmatic and existential probing of its nature. Instead of asking *what* a sign is, he asks *how* it is that we discover, interpret, and use signs in the first place.

To begin with, the sign is a sign on account of our engagement with it. The sign *affects* us. In its presence we are filled with feelings that set it apart from other objects and which make us aware that there is much more to it than its mere presence at hand. Deleuze observes that a sign can fill us with 'nervous exaltation' (*PS*, p.7), 'jealousy', or the 'joys' and 'sufferings' of many different 'sensuous impressions' (*PS*, pp.11–12). Its signing is constituted by this existential grip on us that demands we overcome its mere appearance in order to explore fully its relation both to the feeling it conjures within us and to the other actions and thoughts surrounding it.

Think of the narrator of the *Search* with his 'petite madeleine' and tea. Upon tasting it, he declares that its sensation:

> had the effect, which love has, of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it *was* me. I had ceased now to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? I sensed that it was connected with the taste of the tea and the cake, but that it infinitely transcended those savours, [and] could not, indeed, be of the same nature. Where did it come from? What did it mean? How could I seize and apprehend it? (*SLT*, I, p.60)

Deleuze loved this example because everything is there: the sign overwhelming us, filling us with both joy and apprehension, compelling us to find its meaning. What does it mean? What is it that overwhelms us and surpasses this cake, this taste, this joy?:

> I put down the cup and examine my own mind. It alone can discover the truth. But how? What an abyss of uncertainty, whenever the mind feels overtaken by itself; when it, the seeker, is at the same time the dark region through which it must go seeking and where all its equipment will avail it nothing. See? More than that: create. It is face to face with something which does not yet exist, which it alone can make actual, which it alone can bring into the light of day. (*SLT*, I, p.61)

The narrator must 'seek' out the answers to these questions and not so much to find them, but to 'create' their meaning. Meanwhile, the sign is revealed as the production of meaning and of the various incarnations of an invisible essence assaulting us.

The first thing we can say *a posteriori* of the sign is that even though it emerges in relation to what we already know, it assails us because it has no place in that knowledge. Otherwise it would not 'sign' to us, but would be understood immediately. Instead, it brutally exists before us as a recognizable but amorphous material, but also as a feeling that drives us beyond that material, motivating us to grasp its significance.

In the presence of a sign, though, the question remains: to what world, if not our own, does this sign belong? If the sign immediately has no place in our understanding and in the world we know, it necessarily represents *another* world with which we are not familiar. But upon its arrival, we are blocked from this foreign world of the sign. The sign seems

caught between worlds, struggling to find expression in our understanding, but remaining attached to some other. It expresses some truth about both, but in a vague relation that needs to be exposed. Consequently, every sign inaugurates a search that may propel us into a new world, one with which we are, prior to the apprenticeship, unacquainted: 'The *Search* is presented as the exploration of different worlds of signs which are organized in circles and intersect at certain points, for the signs are specific and constitute the substance of one world or another' (*PS*, p.5). From this perspective, the *Search* can be seen as an exploration of the different worlds of the narrator's past (e.g. the world of the Verdurins, Swann's world, the world of the Méséglise Way versus that of the Guermantes Way, or the worlds of Combray, Balbec, Doncières, etc.). As he follows their signs, the narrator builds these worlds in his own mind, blending them in and out of each other in ever increasing complexity.

Now, a world is a world because it has some degree of consistency, that is to say coherence, in the meanings of its signs. If worlds are organized 'in circles', it is because of the different codes of meaning between them. We must keep in mind that what a sign means in one world is not what it means in another; and it is the consistency of these distinct meanings that keeps these worlds apart, allowing them to function in different ways:

> The worlds are unified by the formation of sign systems, emitted by persons, objects, substances; we discover no truth, we learn nothing except by deciphering and interpreting. But the plurality of worlds is such that these signs are not of the same kind, do not have the same way of appearing, do not allow themselves to be deciphered in the same manner, do not have an identical relation with their meaning. The hypothesis that the signs form both the unity and the plurality of the *Search* must be verified by considering the worlds in which the hero participates directly. (*PS*, p.5)

Epistemologically, a world remains a closed 'circle' or 'system' that preserves its space only by sustaining its individual codes and series of meanings. Signs and objects that do not adhere to these codes must be excluded, or else the circle can be opened and become part of another world. For example, think of how the 'little clan' of the Verdurins is defined by what the narrator can only call the 'tacit' 'Creed' of Mme Verdurin and her husband (*SLT*, I, p.265). But Swann's strange codes do not always fit in there, as his worldly mannerisms, which have been assembled from other influential circles of acquaintance, threaten

Mme Verdurin. She begins to distrust him the moment she realizes his popularity and his sphere of influence which link him to worlds larger than her own (*SLT*, I, p.307).[6] Jealous, she breaks ties with Swann before he can sweep away any member of her clan into these other worlds.

It is only by deciphering the codes and relations of a sign that we begin to understand its systems of meaning (that is, its worlds and their plurality) and thus begin to see its grander significance. But we have not as yet reached the truth of the sign, for the truth of the sign exceeds its significance both in the amorphous material of the sign as well as in the insignificant search preceding and positing its meaning. The sign is more than its worlds and its concrete impressions: it is a '*precious essence*' (*SLT*, I, p.60),[7] which not only solicits materials, but also conducts their meaningful relations to each other. Meanwhile, this essence somehow also manages to evade these concrete instantiations, allowing it to continue repeating its invisible production of these differences.

Proust's hero discovers firsthand how signs evade their concrete meanings and how they repeatedly reveal new 'truths' as they are pursued. While circulating among the upper echelons of French society and in the subjective worlds of his memories, the narrator discovers signs that repeat from one world to the next. With every leap, though, the meaning of any particular sign can either change or become infinitely more complex. What he thinks he knows in one circle of acquaintances fails in another, and in the array of different circles, the meaning of every sign becomes layered.[8] Consider the 'petite madeleine' again: its sign means both the object of the cake but also, subjectively, it elicits both the memory of aunt Léonie and Sunday mornings in Combray, and:

> immediately the old grey house upon the street [. . .] the garden which had been built out behind it [. . .] and with the house the town, from morning to night and in all weathers, the Square where I used to be sent before lunch, the streets along which I used to run errands, the country roads we took when it was fine. (*SLT*, I, p.64)

So many different meanings are at play here, all charging toward their own worlds, 'moved as if by magic' (*SLT,* VI, p.255). Accordingly, in Proust, Deleuze uncovers four basic kinds of signs which in turn correspond to four different kinds of worlds. These signs differ in kind from each other primarily because of our existential disposition toward them and the extent to which we are willing to tarry in their search.

The sign always already materializes within an entire existential framework, and its meaning is composed both within what we already know,

and also in the context of our desire to know it; this is the insignificant intensity we bear toward it. *Insignificant*, because existentially the sign agitates us, but the meaning of that agitation is unspecified until we have apprenticed with it. Instead, our search expresses a plethora of ways that we can relate to it and thus a simultaneous multiplicity of meanings. On a strictly material level, it is not that the sign perpetually changes, but instead that, in our search, we change our relation to that sign and thus constantly alter both its significant meaning and its insignificant desire.

Of this multiplicity, the most basic expression of meaning occurs in what Deleuze calls the 'worldly sign'. Let us trace its movement. We stumble upon a sign. This sign, in turn, is a sign because it is coupled with a feeling that obliges us to search for its meaning. It leaps out at us from materiality and demands that we apprentice with it until we can discover its 'truth'. But what is it that is leaping out at us? What is a 'worldly sign'?:

> The worldly sign appears as the replacement of an action or thought. It stands for action and for thought. It is therefore a sign which does not refer to something else, to a transcendent signification or to an ideal content, but which has usurped the supposed value of its meaning. This is why worldliness, judged from the viewpoint of actions, appears to be disappointing and cruel; and from the viewpoint of thought, it appears stupid. One does not think and one does not act, but one makes signs. (*PS*, p.6)

To begin with, the sign is still somewhat attached to the significant action or thought from which it sprang. However, by 'replacing' this action or thought, Deleuze means that the sign refuses this signification, instead signifying something else. Where a sign replaces a thought, it 'appears stupid' because it no longer shares the meaning of the thought it replaces. It is meaningless and nonsensical. Where a sign replaces an action, it 'appears to be disappointing and cruel' because it has no connection to the course of actions hitherto. It is clumsy or awkward, the sign of an action with no bearing.

Although materially identical to them, the sign cannot be declared a specific action or thought because it does not yet have significance. It is entirely meaningless, only becoming an action or thought after it relates to other materials. There is no transcendent signifier at work, no ideal correspondence of the sign to a preordained set of materials; there is only a coincidence of material relations which somehow express each other so as to become actions and thoughts.

Deleuze's emphasis on the amorphousness of the sign and its ability to depose meaningful actions and thoughts discloses his implicit concept of meaning: namely, that a meaning is forged when one concrete material correlates to another. The 'search' is this process, wherein materiality spontaneously creates these correlative bonds, these simple codes of meaning.

First, the sign correlates immediately to its own material, while our affection expresses itself in that material; and that is when 'the sign's meaning appears, yielding to us the concealed object' (*PS*, pp.11–12). When the amorphous feeling of a sign and the amorphous material eliciting that feeling correlate, both 'meaning' and the 'object' are produced. They mutually articulate each other, creating a meaning that is entirely redundant. Deleuze calls this redundancy '*objectivism*' (*PS,* p.26). Objectivism is not to be confused with objectivity which has its own concept and history in philosophy. Nor is it an obscure reference to Ayn Rand.[9] Deleuze's concept is uniquely his own and has a very particular sense. In Deleuze's objectivism, we 'attribute to the object the signs it bears' and 'we think that the "object" itself has the secret of the signs it emits' (*PS*, p.26–27). For instance, the narrator realizes that the madeleine and tea are the object of the sign he receives, but this tells him nothing, and he devours the cake knowing there is something more there (i.e. the memories haunting him) (*SLT*, I, p.64).

To succumb to objectivism and to interpret the sign only in terms of its own object do not bring us any new knowledge about the sign. Rather, it is more like a habitual association or the natural tendency to associate the sign with what is closest to hand. In contrast, if we are to know this sign's *significance*, we must surpass this superficial meaning and explore the sign's relation to *other* signs and objects. Deleuze says:

> Each sign has two halves: it *designates* an object, it *signifies* something different. The objective side is the side of pleasure, of immediate delight and of practice. Taking this way, we have already sacrificed the 'truth' side. We recognize things, but we never know them. What the sign signifies we identify with the person or object it designates. We miss our finest encounters, we avoid the imperatives which emanate from them: to the exploration of encounters we have preferred the facility of recognitions. (*PS*, p.26)

In objectivism, we *designate* the sign by correlating its feeling to the particular object that existentially strikes us. This gives new meaning to both, for they are now understood in terms of each other, and we are

filled with the immediate pleasure of knowing the sign's reference. Coupled with the feeling of the sign, the object takes on a greater significance and the potential to reveal even more signs, objects and worlds. On this account, Deleuze calls them 'worldly signs' (*PS*, pp.5–6), for they represent our passage into another world and our first contact with the unfamiliar essence that signifies so much more.[10]

However, in light of the worldly sign's greater significance, its meaning-as-object quickly becomes nothing but a 'disappointment'. Let us consider, for example, all the narrator's disappointments: 'Disappointment on first hearing Vinteuil, on first meeting Bergotte, on first seeing the Balbec church' or 'When he sees, then comes to know Mme de Guermantes' (*PS*, pp.32–3). The sign of them all, which could mean so much, attaches itself onto these base materials, these first impressions; but this does little to help us know them beyond this completely superficial meaning. Instead, the same existential compulsion that led us to associate the sign with its designative object now pushes us to understand that object in terms of others; and beyond the sign's designation, we begin looking for its significance, that is, its meaning relative to other meaningful objects and signs. Instead of an amorphous material signing to us, it is as if the entire object becomes a sign, and we begin correlating it to other objects, learning more about its place in the world as we go.

We encounter a different type of sign at this point, a sign which allows us to extend its meaning. This other side of the sign is entirely subjective, for it emerges from within our feeling that the sign means more than its object and bears a personal significance above and beyond objective associations. Accordingly, Deleuze calls these the signs 'of love', for, in Proust, these are best exemplified by those characters possessed by 'love's signs' (*PS*, pp.7–9). The lover refuses to take their beloved's signs at face value, imagining all sorts of hidden worlds they could possibly signify. Consider the signs the narrator receives from Albertine: touches, glances, notes, all of which he interprets to mean some affection, but which he misreads, embarrassing and frustrating him (*SLT*, II, p.510); or the signs Swann receives from Odette: are these genuine signs of affection, or is she hiding a secret affair? The signs of love are open to interpretation, as if their truth resides in an unknown sphere:

> Love's signs are not like the signs of worldliness; they are not empty signs, standing for thought and action. They are deceptive signs which can be addressed to us only by concealing what they express: the origin of unknown worlds, of unknown actions and thoughts which

> give them a meaning. [...] The interpreter of love's signs is necessarily the interpreter of lies. (*PS*, p.9)

We are forever blocked from our beloved's inner worlds which they reveal to us as signs and objects whose exact meaning we do not know. Instead, we interpret them through our own understanding and give them a meaning that is entirely artificial and subjective, drawn from our own experience. Our search is confined to the objects it knows, linking them in all sorts of series of expression, trying frantically to get to the truth of them. But the more we search them, the more interpretations we reach. Swann reels in conspiracies when he finds a letter from Odette to Forcheville:

> His jealousy, like an octopus which throws out a first, then a second, and finally a third tentacle, fastened itself firmly to that particular moment, five o'clock in the afternoon, then to another, then to another again [. . .], the perpetuation of a suffering that had come from without. (*SLT*, I, pp.402–3)

The signs of love indicate hidden worlds which all come 'from without' so that they cannot be revealed by any object we know.

We encounter a third type of sign here, an inversion of the first two and their worlds. Insofar as the sign has meaning in an object or in a subjective series of objects, this meaning is achieved only by what it simultaneously excludes, namely the sign's relation to other objects and understandings. The sign still signifies these, only differently and in different series. The more we search this sign, the more we are led past its subjective meanings into its universality and its ability to express and signify infinite objects and worlds.

Deleuze calls them 'sensuous qualities' or 'sensuous signs' (*PS*, pp.39 & 54). The feeling produced by the sign becomes perpetual, expressed in one object then another, one world then the next. It becomes a quality of them all, universally shared by them, but bearing different and even contradictory meanings in each. For instance, the narrator's love of the name Guermantes implies a range of ideas: the memory of the Guermantes Way, the social worlds of the Hôtel de Guermantes, the opera, Mme de Villeparisis's, not to mention Mme de Guermantes's style of dress and different ways of conducting herself (*SLT*, I, pp.188 & 256–62).[11] The 'place-name' Guermantes is not just an object of a subjective infatuation, but the sign and quality of all these strange worlds.

These sensuous signs each allude to a much more profound essence at work, incarnated by their search and by all the meanings produced through them. Beneath them is a fourth kind of sign, a sign with the infinite potential to be taken up again and again and searched all over, producing endless concrete meanings without succumbing to any one of them. This fourth type of sign, this essence, is not so much a sign as much as it is the power of signing itself. Unlike sensuous signs or qualities, which always have a concrete sense, the essences are instead the immaterial forces that produce these concrete phenomena in the first place. Deleuze calls them 'signs of art' (*PS*, p.39), denoting their productive capacity which is ontological and which imparts signs, objects, significations and worlds all at once:

> What is the superiority of the signs of art over all the others? It is that the others are material. Material, first of all, by their emission: they are half sheathed in the object bearing them. Sensuous qualities, loved faces are still matter. (It is no accident that the significant sensuous qualities are above all odors and flavors: the most material of qualities.) *Only the signs of art are immaterial* [. . .], art gives us the true unity: unity of an immaterial sign and of an entirely spiritual meaning. The essence is precisely this unity of sign and meaning as it is revealed in the work of art. (*PS*, pp.39–41)

Art becomes the object just as it becomes the qualities and meanings associated with that object. Yet when we consider all of these material substantiations individually, we see that none of them captures the immaterial spirit of their creation. In contrast, when taken holistically, all of these materials vaguely outline a 'work of art' that constantly exceeds its own dimensions, erupting in new impressions, signs, and insights at every moment.

Not coincidentally, Proust's anecdotes about art all allude to the explosive power of these essences. For example, the dramatic art of La Berma is more than a presentation on stage: it is the narrator's love and infatuation, her myth and charisma, the social circles at the opera, and the private worlds of the Guermantes. Or consider the musical art of Vinteuil which symbolizes 'another world' for Swann and still another for the narrator (*SLT*, I, p.308). Meanwhile, the paintings of Elstir display countless worlds that forever alter the way the narrator views Balbec (*SLT*, II, p.479). Regardless of its form or medium, art leads us to these radical transformations and creations which change our worlds and divulge a productive essence that surpasses all our understanding.

Accordingly, Deleuze conceives of all signs as ontologically being part of two different levels. On the one hand, the sign is concrete, distinctly perceived as some feeling, objectively articulated by some object, and significantly related to other objects and multiple worlds. This concrete level is hierarchized epistemologically into its own levels of meaning: amorphous concrete materials and signs express each other to become meaningful objects; objects express each other to become significations; while significations express each other to create individual worlds, each with their own codes and 'over-codes' that preserve them from each other.

On the other hand, and at another level, the sign is completely immaterial, amorphous, and virtual. In Proust's words, it is 'real without being actual, ideal without being abstract' (*SLT*, IV, p.264). It is an essence that inheres within all the materials it expresses, but which is not signified completely by any one of them. It is 'pure matter which is entirely distinct from the matter of the common things that we see and touch but of which [. . .] they too had seemed to me to be composed' (*SLT*, IV, p.270). This sign is rather searched *through* all of these 'common things' and expressed significantly *by* all of them simultaneously, so that its truth is multifarious, inter-subjective, multi-worldly, infinite, and utterly schizophrenic.

For Deleuze, the *Search* displays all these levels at once, but only as we relate to it, and only insofar as we are willing to search its signs ourselves and chase their essences. In light of Deleuze's account, we cannot help but read Proust differently. To begin with, we never read Proust, we search Proust. *In Search of Lost Time* is not so much a significant work of literature, but a sort of anti-literature, a collection of signs that explode into worlds. We search Proust at least four times: first as a collection of powerful signs and objects, bound by a literary essence that gathers signs capable of generating their own worlds and series. Rather than scenes and chapters in Proust, we find worlds that fold over one another and into one another in all directions. Second, as lovers of Proust, we should give him a paranoiac reading that strives to understand everything about his hidden worlds: how all the worlds relate literally and the signs that unite them; the references implied by the text and the historical context in which it was written; the structures and motifs of language that he uses to produce his effects, etc. In other words, we should undertake a *scholastic* reading of the master of literature and the rebel of its discipline. Third, we must give Proust a sensuous reading, allowing it to overwhelm our faculties until we see the signs and qualities of his worlds in our own. Only then can we embrace Proust and his worlds as techniques of

living and responding to life: Cardiff as Combray or Toronto as Balbec.[12] Finally, we must produce through, and with, the essence of Proust. We must allow Proust to inspire us toward art, toward an infinite creation that is never our own, but neither is it his. Rather, it is something in-between, an altogether different essence which blossoms between them throughout our lives.

Notes

1. Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, 6 vols (New York: Modern Library, 1998–2003), VI, p.280. Hereafter referred to as *SLT*.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs* (New York: George Braziller, 1972). Hereafter referred to as *PS*.
3. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (Chicago: Open Court, 2005), p.15.
4. Thomas Sebeok offers a convenient summary in *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), pp.4–11.
5. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, tr. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp.111–49. Hereafter referred to as *TP*. Later, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze will also discover four regimes of signs that represent four socio-political regimes that result when the state itself controls its signs differently, namely: the primitive state and pre-signifying semiotic where signs use up their names and significations as soon as they are found; the despotic state and signifying regime where all signs must correspond to explicit meanings, enforced by law in the state that desires to signify everything and have nothing outside its domain; the counter-signifying semiotic and nomadic war machine which is always against the despotic state, mixing empires and regimes of signs, destroying or hybridizing them; and the post-signifying regime where everything is subject to its own proceeding, judged in a virtual tyrannical model. The four different types of signs in Proust become these four different types of semiotics and politics. For instance, the worldly sign is like its own pre-signifying regime; the signs of love are the beginning of signification and the signifying regime; the sensuous signs all function in a mixed and counter-signifying semiotic; while the signs of art each represent a virtual and infinite world which becomes so many significant and subjective worlds and proceedings (*TP*, pp.111–35).
6. Or, in contrast, consider Saint-Loup's little circle at Balbec to which the narrator gains entrance by repeating all the same styles and codes of behaviour, but in which Bloch fails because he has not mastered the rules (*SLT*, II, pp.374–5).
7. These are Proust's words, but Deleuze takes the term for his own and launches into a complete philosophical treatment of them, both in *Proust and Signs* and in all his subsequent works. See in particular *PS*, pp. 39–51, and *Expressionism and Philosophy: Spinoza*, tr. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992), pp.191–200.
8. For instance, in vol. I alone, the narrator explicitly declares the existence of various worlds: the inner 'world' of the narrator's bedroom (*SLT*, I, p.7), 'the

unknown world' of women (*SLT*, I, p.119), the two 'planes' of the narrator's image of Mme de Guermantes and her actual presence (*SLT*, I, pp.247–9), the little phrase by Vinteuil which was 'another world' for Swann (*SLT*, I, p.308), and the world of emotions vs the 'world of colours' induced in the narrator by Gilberte (*SLT*, I, p.591). But every episode and scene within the work constitutes its own world, made up of its own objects and signs: Combray, Mme de Villeparisis's house, Swann's Way, the Guermantes Way, the Verdurins' Circle, the Marquise de Saint-Euverte's, the Champs-Elysées, the Bois de Boulogne, the Méséglise Way, Balbec, etc.

9. Rand developed both an ethical and epistemological theory called 'Objectivism' throughout her writings. Specifically, see Ayn Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (New York: New American Library, 1979).
10. Deleuze says: 'The first world of the *Search* is the world of, precisely, worldliness. There is no milieu which emits and concentrates so many signs, in such reduced space, at so great a rate. It is true that these signs themselves are not homogeneous. At one and the same moment they are differentiated, not only according to classes but according to even more fundamental "families of mind". From one moment to the next, they evolve, crystallize, or give way to other signs. Thus the apprentice's task is to understand why someone is "received" in a certain world, why someone ceases to be so; what signs do the worlds obey, which signs are legislators, and which high priests' (*PS*, pp.5–6). Every worldly sign is the beginning of an entire world which spirals out from it, correlating to other signs and objects as we search it; while, on the other hand, every world is characterized by its signs which assume different functions and varying degrees of importance from one world to the next. In this way, signs delimit the worlds, while the worlds are to be judged by their signs.
11. However, it is not until vol. III that these worlds are firmly established and begin to take on a life different from what the narrator imagined in his youth.
12. This concept of art as a 'life technique' is accredited to Shirmacher in, *Lifeworld and Technology*, eds Timothy Casey and Lester Embree (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), pp.5–39.

3
Different Essences and Essential Differences: Proust versus Deleuze

Erika Fülöp

This chapter aims to analyse a point of interaction between *A la recherche du temps perdu* and the philosophy of difference as construed and outlined by Deleuze in *Proust et les signes*. My investigation will focus on Deleuze's claim that essence, as it appears in Proust's novel, is 'une différence, la Différence ultime et absolue' [a difference, the ultimate and absolute Difference].[1] I shall consider the question that is raised by this proposition of whether the essence of the Proustian world does, indeed, contain multiplicity or difference, whether it is 'complicated' in the Deleuzian sense of the word. After a brief exposition of Deleuze's concept, as he develops it in 'Les signes de l'art et de l'essence' [The Signs of Art and Essence],[2] I shall proceed to compare a selection of passages from the *Recherche* to the assumptions made in 'Les signes de l'art et de l'essence' in a global endeavour to point out an inherent incompatibility between Proust's 'essence' and Deleuzian 'difference'.

In response to the question of what exactly the 'Différence ultime et absolue' [ultimate and absolute difference] identified with Proust's essence *is*, Deleuze answers as follows:

> [Elle est n]on pas une différence empirique entre deux choses ou deux objets, toujours extrinsèque. Proust donne une première approximation de l'essence, quand il dit qu'elle est quelque chose dans un sujet, comme la présence d'une qualité dernière au cœur d'un sujet: différence interne, '*différence qualitative* qu'il y a dans la façon dont nous apparaît le monde, différence qui, s'il n'y avait pas l'art, resterait le secret éternel de chacun'. A cet égard, Proust est leibnizien: les essences sont des véritables monades, chacune se définissant par le point de vue auquel elle exprime le monde, chaque point de vue renvoyant lui-même à une qualité ultime au fond de la monade. Comme dit Leibniz,

> elles n'ont ni portes ni fenêtres: le point de vue étant la différence elle-même, des points de vue sur un monde supposé le même sont aussi différents que les mondes les plus lointains. (*PS*, p.54)
>
> [It is not an empirical difference between two things or two objects, which is always extrinsic. Proust offers an initial approximation of essence when he says that it is something within a subject, like the presence of some fundamental quality at the core of a subject, internal difference, '*a qualitative difference* that exists in the way the world appears to us, a difference which would remain the eternal secret of each one of us if art did not exist'. In this respect, Proust is Leibnizian: essences are true monads, each one defining itself by means of the viewpoint in which it expresses the world, with each viewpoint itself reflecting some ultimate quality in the depths of the monad. As Leibniz says, monads have neither doors nor windows: as viewpoint is difference itself, the viewpoints on any world that is supposed to be the same are as different as the most distant worlds].

The essence mentioned by Deleuze in this passage can belong only to individuals: Leibniz's concept of the monad, with which Proustian essence is identified here, lends itself well to such an anthropomorphization. The point of view proper and unique to each monad is responsible for the 'qualité d'un monde originel' (*PS*, p.61) [quality of each original world] which it encloses and expresses; and it is at the same time, in the case of the artist, the condition of possibility of artistic creation. Essences, in this sense, and in the spirit of the Leibnizian monadology set out by Deleuze in *Le Pli* [*The Fold*], are 'sujet-monades' [subject-monads] which, as Deleuze says, 'ne pourront se distinguer [entre eux] que par leur manière interne d'exprimer le monde' [can be distinguished [from one another] only by their inner manner of expressing the world].[3] Deleuze also uses the term 'notion individuelle' (*PLB*, p.66) [individual notion] when speaking of the same concept, warning nonetheless against a hasty identification of the essence with the subject that 'contains' it and which it individualizes.

Following a logic common to both Proust and Deleuze up to this point, we can speak not only of a 'différence qualitative' [qualitative difference] resulting from the uniqueness of the viewpoint proper to each person, but also of a multiplicity inherent in every individual, a multiplicity that represents the 'réalité profonde' [profound reality], that is, the essence of each person. Deleuze mentions Charlus as an archetype of being 'complicated', but we may also think of Albertine. Both are of significant importance in terms of Proust's vision of human nature, a vision that

accords with what Deleuze calls the 'définition réelle' [real definition] of the individual in *Le Pli*: an individual is the 'concentration, accumulation, coïncidence d'un certain nombre de singularités pré-individuelles convergentes' (*PLB*, p.85) [concentration, accumulation, coincidence of a certain number of convergent, pre-individual singularities]. Essence, in this sense, for Proust as well as for Deleuze, is, indeed, a 'complication' which 'enveloppe le multiple dans l'Un et affirme l'Un du multiple' (*PS*, p.58) [envelops the multiple within the One and establishes the One in relation to the multiple].

However, when Deleuze goes on to interpret the birth of the work of art, the concept of essence seems to outgrow the limits of the subject-monad, as it were, and comes to embrace the relationship between subject and object on the one hand, and that between two objects on the other. Essence now appears as the 'quality of a world' approaching two different objects by revealing the quality they share (*PS*, p.61). It is *analogy*, so dear to Proust's heart, that is at work here; analogy which, in order for it to be perceived, requires a special perspicacity, a certain sensitivity. This quality in common, or analogy, is the result of what Deleuze calls the 'power of repetition' of essence, whereas the 'complication' found in persons is the manifestation of the 'power of difference' that is proper to the essence. Yet according to *Différence et répétition* [*Difference and Repetition*], both aspects of the essence derive from the same original Difference.

For Proust, the essence which embraces difference is not, I would contend, the most fundamental Essence. The author of the *Recherche* recognizes and, indeed, accepts the essentially complicated nature of people and makes it one of the cornerstones of his conception of the birth of art: the artist's vision shows the world in a unique way, from a particular point of view which is created by the multiplicity peculiar to the individual, to each individual. On the other hand, it is precisely something *beyond* multiplicities that constitutes the ultimate target of artistic creation. The 'Essence' par excellence in and of the Proustian universe cannot be anything other than the ultimate object of the quest. And that object is not one or more monads, nor is it the relationships between them: these do no more than help one approach the final goal. What is most essential in the *Recherche*, I would argue, is surrounded by a multitude of essences producing a whirl of little secrets around this One which is itself much sought after but, in its unity, affected by nothing.

Deleuze says that it is '[l']Art qui nous donne la véritable unité' (*PS*, p.53) [Art which accords us true unity], because the essence that is manifest in it is 'précisément cette unité du signe et du sens' (ibid.)

[precisely the unity of the sign and of meaning], at the same time, as we have seen, as being Difference itself. However, there is something in the *Recherche* that precedes the discovery of art as a possible sphere of unity; something that appears to be the site of a real unity without difference: the impression made by the steeples of Martinville. Deleuze relegates this experience to the secondary level of sensuous signs, which seems to me to be an underestimation of a fundamental point about the Proustian vision of the world.

The salient example of art in the novel, Vinteuil's septet, demonstrates the primary importance of this kind of sensuous sign for the domain of art as well as for the individual's life:

> cette phrase [de Vinteuil] était ce qui aurait pu le mieux caractériser [...] ces impressions qu'à des intervalles éloignés je retrouvais dans ma vie comme les points de repère, les amorces, pour la construction d'une vie véritable : l'impression éprouvée devant les clochers de Martinville, devant une rangée d'arbres près de Balbec.[4]
>
> [this phrase [of Vinteuil's] was what could best have summed [it] up [...] those impressions, separated by long intervals, which I recalled from my previous existence as landmarks, points of departure for the construction of a true life: the impression I had felt before the spires of Martinville, before a line of trees near Balbec]. (*SLT,* V, p.239)

And again, a hundred pages later in *La Prisonnière*, we read:

> Ainsi rien ne ressemblait plus qu'une belle phrase de Vinteuil à ce plaisir particulier que j'avais quelquefois éprouvé dans ma vie, par exemple devant les clochers de Martinville, certains arbres d'une route de Balbec ou plus simplement, au début de cet ouvrage, en buvant une certaine tasse de thé. (*RTP*, III, pp.876–7).
>
> [Thus, nothing came closer than a fine phrase of Vinteuil's to the particular pleasure which I had sometimes experienced in my life, before the spires of Martinville, for example, or certain trees on a road at Balbec, or more simply, as at the beginning of this work, when drinking a certain mouthful of tea]. (*SLT*, V, p.346)

Music carries a 'nuance nouvelle de la joie, [un] appel vers une joie supraterrestre' (*RTP*, III, p.765) ['new kind of elation, [an] appeal to a joy not of this earth' (*SLT*, V, p.239)], thereby inviting an association with the impression created by the privileged moments. The 'qualité inconnue d'un monde unique' (*RTP*, III, p.877) ['unknown quality of a

unique world' (*SLT*, V, p.347)] which we may perceive in the product of the artistic genius thus evokes not only the individual world proper to the artist, but also a quality that is unique and in some way proper to the world itself. The latter reveals itself only in and through 'l'art véritable' [true art] *and* the original impressions art evokes.

According to one of the key sentences of the *Recherche*, 'seule l'impression [...] est un critérium de vérité' (*RTP*, IV, p.458) ['only the impression [...] can be a criterion of truth' (*SLT*, VI, p.188)]. But what is an impression? The etymology of the word suggests that it is something that comes from outside and moves in toward the subject; thus its source is in the external world. '[T]oute impression est double, à demi engainée dans l'objet, prolongée en nous-même par une autre moitié' (*RTP*, IV, p.470) ['every impression comes in two parts, half of it contained within the object, and the other half [...] extending into us' (*SLT*, VI, p.200)], concludes the narrator, emphasizing that 'seule la perception grossière et erronée place tout dans l'objet, quand tout est dans l'esprit' (*RTP*, IV, p.491) ['only coarse and inaccurate perception [...] places everything in the object, when everything is in the mind' (*SLT*, VI, p.221)]. The question to which the narrator attempts an answer here is also one of the main concerns of all philosophy: how to conceive the encounter of the subject with the object, the coming together of the subjective and the objective in representation? The solution proposed by Friedrich Schelling's philosophy of identity seems particularly likely to provide adequate background for an understanding of the experience of the Proustian narrator: the material world and the self accord and can meet because they are originally one. In other words, there is continuity, unity or identity in the world, instead of two distinct entities and qualities, as we more commonly and readily think. According to Schelling, the separation of subject and object happens only in consciousness. Perception of the unity which guarantees the 'prolonging' of the impression in the subject at the same time as its dependence on the object presupposes, therefore, that the subject, in some way, steps out of his usual state of consciousness and takes a look behind the curtain.

In the experiences provided by the hawthorns at Combray, the trees at Hudimesnil and, above all by the steeples of Martinville, it is, as the narrator says, the 'rind' of things that is seen being 'peeled away', torn, or at least cracked for a second before the narrator.[5] According to Deleuze, these events are encounters with sensuous signs which, because they are material, are considered to be secondary when compared to the signs of art. In the spirit of the novel, the signs of art are, in reality, what is most superior in the world of signs. But the 'mystery' glimpsed in the

moment of the peeling away the rind of things is *not* a sign any more, but precisely that to which all signs are ultimately supposed to refer. If the steeples themselves are traces, what they contain and hide is a *presence*, the presence of a clear and unambiguous *sense*. It is, no doubt, a presence impossible to grasp by representation, pure thought or writing, but can be perceived in the sheer 'being-there' shared by the narrator and the steeples, outside time and space.

This is what I regard as the most fundamental Essence in the Proustian universe, while all other essences related to people and to the relationships between objects are closer to the surface. It is the essences of people and things that differentiate into signs and provide the material that the artist 'translates' in and by his style. The example of Vinteuil's septet has shown that the ultimate Essence can also be manifest in the new entity and quality of the work of art and can guarantee a real 'unité du signe et du sens' (*PS*, p.53) [unity of the sign and of meaning] within it. Yet this unity does not derive from the complicated nature of essences, but from the Identity represented by this unique Essence.

The interpretation I am offering of the Essence of the Proustian novel brings it close to the Schellingian Absolute. Without wanting to seem an advocate of the trend in Proust criticism that considers the *Recherche* as the transposition of a philosophical system, I find nonetheless that the affinity of thought providing the basis for such a reading of the novel does exist. The most apparent manifestation of this kinship in the mystery of impressions is precisely what gives this novel – which lies 'between two centuries' – its Romantic aspect.[6]

Understanding Essence in the way I propose implies that the Proustian quest is itself based on a fundamentally Romantic-Idealist aspiration. The text is perfectly explicit concerning the narrator's feelings in the privileged moments: he speaks of a 'plaisir spécial', 'une sorte d'ivresse' (*RTP*, I, p.177) ['a special pleasure', 'a sort of intoxication' (*SLT*, I, p.180)], of 'une joie pareille à une certitude' (*RTP*, IV, p.446) ['a joy akin to certainty' (*SLT*, VI, p.176)], and even of a momentary indifference towards death. It is this special happiness that becomes the object of desire, for this state represents all that is contrary to his 'normal' mode of existence: anxiety. Indeed, is there anything more wanted and sought after by the narrator than ease of mind, the quietude which he so rarely has a chance to enjoy? The wait for the mother's goodnight kiss, the journey to Balbec and Venice, the imprisonment of the – perhaps not even so very beloved – woman, the urge to start writing and produce a work of art – all of these are nothing but a series of sheer annoyances in themselves, accepted only for the sake of a possible transformation of his eternal

anxiety into a peace where there is no difference to generate conflict. Art will be recognized as the only means to approach this ideal, this 'énigme du bonheur' (*RTP*, IV, p.446) ['this riddle of happiness' (*SLT*, VI, p.176)] which consists in the vanishing of 'tout doute intellectuel' (*RTP*, IV, p.445) ['all intellectual doubt' (*SLT*, VI, p.176)]. But art is necessary only because the privileged moments cannot be perpetuated as such. The vital *and* metaphysical importance of the impressions is not inferior to those of art, but the latter seems to need to get the last word, since the privileged moments cannot be produced by the conscious and voluntary activity of the subject.

To support my conclusion as regards the impossibility of reconciling the foundation of the Proustian world with Deleuze's difference with a further argument, I should like to evoke briefly two aspects of the latter set out in *Différence et répétition*. The first is the double process of 'différent/ciation':[7] the deep, original difference, which is nothing but intensity, comes about in the primary process of differentiation, whereas a second process of differenciation produces secondary differences, the diversity of the surface. The other point to be mentioned is the problematic nature of the primary, profound difference and the imperative it generates: as opposed to cognition and recognition, traditionally associated with thought in search of a unique, pre-established truth, the logic of difference is based on the event of a 'rencontre fondamentale' (*DR*, p.182) [fundamental encounter] with a '*sentiendum*'.

Everything that Deleuze says about the object of such an encounter accords perfectly with the Proustian experience of impressions – except in one respect. For Deleuze, the object of encounter itself 'fait problème' (*DR*, p.182) [is problematic]; it is 'porteur de problème' (*DR*, p.183) [problem-bearing]: it produces an imperative and launches the work of thought. The object of encounter is, for him, a sign like the steeples of Martinville which he classifies as sensuous signs. Yet what constitutes the real object of encounter for Proust's narrator when considering the steeples is not simply a sign, but its very *sense*, hidden and revealed at the same time. The event is, for him, the unique, momentary 'peeling away' of the rind of things and the glimpse at what lies behind; and what is there is precisely the one thing in the world that is not problematic or complicated in itself, but rather the simplest and most evident possible. What is problematic instead is the access to that unknown, outside the rare privileged moments. The imperative is, indeed, the call of the signs, and artistic creation is undoubtedly the ultimate way to obey that imperative. But if the narrator believed that behind the horizon toward which writing tends he would find a problematic difference, rather than

the Identity capable of assuring his peace of mind, he would certainly feel no urge whatsoever to take that path.

However, in the end, he does mean to take that path. Whether or not we read the *Recherche* itself as the book written by its narrator, the problem of writing arises when it comes to 'translating' the experience and to recovering the happiness it involves. Even if the novel belongs to the *tradition* described by Deleuze as that of representation, rather than to the practice of what he calls 'modern writing', the fact that there is transposition, metaphor, style – the fact that there is writing – inevitably implies a differential movement which is *not* at work in the Essence that launches the quest. However, this 'différance' is, again, somewhat different from that of Deleuze: this one is spelled with an *a*.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Quadrige/PUF, 1996), p.53. Hereafter referred to as *PS*. All translations of this and other texts by Deleuze are the author's own.
2. This is the title of the fourth chapter in *Proust et les signes*, pp.51–65.
3. Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli: Leibniz et le Baroque* (Paris: Minuit, 1988), p.67. Hereafter referred to as *PLB*.
4. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié, 4 vols, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1987–89), III, p.765. Hereafter referred to as *RTP*.
5. 'Bientôt leurs lignes et leurs surfaces ensoleillées, comme si elles avaient été une sorte d'écorce, se déchirèrent, un peu de ce qui m'était caché en elles m'apparut [...]' (*RTP*, I, p.178) ['Soon their lines and their sunlit surfaces split apart, as if they were a sort of bark, a little of what was hidden from me inside them appeared to me [...]' (*SLT*, I, p.181)].
6. This is Antoine Compagnon's characterization in *Proust entre deux siècles* (Paris: Seuil, 1989). It is, by the way, precisely this same point that Beckett underlines as the site and sign of Proust's romanticism: 'He is romantic in his *substitution of affectivity to intelligence*, in his opposition of the particular affective evidential state to all the subtleties of rational cross-reference, in his rejection of the Concept in favour of the Idea, in his scepticism before causality': Samuel Beckett, *Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: Calder, 1965), p.81 (author's emphasis).
7. Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), p.270. Hereafter referred to as *DR*.

4

Signs and Subjectivity in *Proust and Signs* and *Cinema 1 and 2*

Joe Hughes

I *Proust and Signs*

In the first chapter of *Proust and Signs*,[1] Deleuze develops a system of signs which he suggests is founded on a careful study of Proust's work. Implicit, in at least a first reading of *Proust and Signs*, is the assumption that this essay is an excavation, a literary critical exegesis of signs at work in Proust's text. Jonathan Culler, in his *Structuralist Poetics*, captures the wonder such a reading of Deleuze will inevitably provoke:

> Proust's work, writes Gilles Deleuze in his brilliant *Proust et les signes*, 'is founded not on the exposition of memory, but on the learning of signs' (p.9). The narrator encounters signs of the social world, signs of love, signs of the tangible world and signs of art which take up and transform all of the others. Not only does Deleuze study the way in which the narrator learns to recognize and interpret these signs and thus to situate himself in the various realms of experience which they structure, *he derives from the novel* a general theory of the features which distinguish these four types of sign [. . .]. The full exploration of these distinctions yields a metalanguage which succeeds better than any other in relating the theoretical speculations of the novel to the different types of action and experience that are developed in the narration; and thus *Deleuze's interpretation* is not simply an account of *Proust's implicit semiological thought* but a superb integration of the Proustian narrator's investigation of signs and his production of signs in the discourse of the novel.[2]

In Culler's reading, *Proust and Signs* approximates the ideal structuralist reading of a text. It constitutes an 'interpretation' or 'study',

in which Deleuze 'derives from the novel' a general theory of signs which describes 'Proust's implicit semiological thought' (Culler, p.122).[3] Indeed, throughout the first chapter Deleuze frequently suggests that he is adopting the methods and techniques of literary criticism.

However, even if this point is conceded, how can we forget that throughout this period Deleuze regularly claimed that the philosopher is not a friend and that philosophical discourse could not presuppose the good will of the thinker? *Proust and Signs* is the second of three books in which Deleuze develops his sweeping criticism of the history of philosophy as 'dogmatic' insofar as it succumbs to a series of 'subjective presuppositions'. *Difference and Repetition* (1968) is by far the most complete and significant account of this critique, developing it over eight postulates, but both *Proust and Signs* (1964) and *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962) contain early formulations of the first postulate, the only one which is common to all three accounts: the goodwill of the thinker and of thought.

In *Proust and Signs* Deleuze explains:

> The philosopher readily presupposes that the mind as mind, the thinker as thinker, wants the truth, loves or desires the truth, naturally seeks the truth. [. . .] In the 'philosopher' there is a 'friend'. [. . .] Friends are, in relation to one another, like minds of goodwill who are in agreement *as to the signification of things and words*; they communicate under the effect of a mutual goodwill. (*PS*, pp.94–5; my emphasis)

This presupposition obviously plays a far more significant and subtle role in *Difference and Repetition*, where it functions in a description of transcendental subjectivity by claiming that thought does not think by itself, prompted by an instinctual drive toward truth, but must be forced to think by the violence of an intensity (in the case of sensibility) or an Idea (in the case of any other possible faculty). However, it also plays a significant role here at the level of our confrontation with philosophical texts. If Deleuze, the famed proponent of philosophical buggery,[4] denies the existence of goodwill between thinkers, to what extent is he likely to encourage it, or to make use of it in his own writings? What if Deleuze instead were writing with an overwhelming animosity? Immediately a basic assumption emerges: 'I've read this book as though it were a book *on* Proust, as if it were a kind of literary criticism that purported to say, with as much accuracy as possible, something *about* Proust and his work'. However, if we put our goodwill and this interpretive assumption

in brackets and shift our focus from those undeniably attractive passages which elaborate the philosophical ideas in Proust to the general conceptual structure at work in *Proust and Signs*, a whole new text comes to light.

This conceptual structure comprises four distinct moments – the four signs – which are traversed by an apprentice. The first kind of sign is the worldly sign, the signs of the social world. The 'worldly' sign has two significant characteristics: its lack of meaning (*PS*, p.85), and its ubiquity: 'There is no milieu that emits and concentrates so many signs, in such reduced space, at so great a rate. [. . .] From one moment to the next, they evolve, crystallize, or give way to other signs' (*PS*, p.5, cf. p.18).

The second kind of signs are signs of love. Ultimately, these signs appear as deceptive: 'The lover wants his beloved to devote to him her preferences, her gestures, her caresses. But the beloved's gestures, at the very moment they are addressed to us, still express that unknown world that excludes us' (*PS*, p.8). Further, since the gestures directed towards us always express a world to which we do not yet belong, they have the flavour of a lie, or a deception. Thus the first law of love is jealousy.

The third kind of sign is the sensuous sign. These are signs of qualities which are no longer related to objects, but instead open on to the world of essences, or virtuality (*PS*, p.57). While these signs come into contact with essence, they do not possess it in itself. They only show us essence in a 'slackened, secondary state and so obscurely that we are incapable of understanding the gift we are given and the joy we experience' (*PS*, p.65). The sensuous sign or 'quality' reveals, momentarily, the virtual, but quickly loses it in quality's own generality and materiality.

These three preceding signs have one thing in common: they are all *material*. They are material both 'by their origin and the way they remain half sheathed in the object' and 'by their development or their explication' (*PS*, pp.40, 13). In the first sense of the word 'material', the signs are referred to the object which emitted them. In the second sense, their 'explication', the signs are placed within a chain of associations which itself is composed of discrete objects. In the famous example of the *madeleine*, the particular sensuous quality is explicated by referring it back to Combray and to all of the objects associated with that place. In this way, materiality makes us miss the essence which the signs incarnate. Deleuze calls the two ways of missing the meaning this way objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism locates the meaning of a sign in the object that emits it, while subjectivism locates the meaning of the sign in the subject that apprehends it. Between subject and object there is essence, which is not reducible to either and which is ultimately responsible for the constitution and unity of the two.

'Yet what else is there except the object and the subject', Deleuze asks, what more than the sign and its material meaning?[5] The fourth kind of sign, the immaterial signs of art, in contrast to the previous three signs, gives us essence independent of the denoted object and the manifested subject. If the previous three signs were arranged along the line of an 'ascending dialectic' or of an apprenticeship whose end was to discover truth as essence, from the point of view of essence we can now look back on the three material moments and see that it was already there the whole time acting as the sufficient reason and law of the other signs.

These four signs have a further characteristic: each type of sign corresponds to a specific line of time. The time spent interpreting worldly signs is time wasted. The time spent interpreting signs of love is a lost time. And although the sensuous signs finally give us an image of eternity, they give it only momentarily at the heart of lost time. These three material signs participate in an attenuated and fragmented time precisely because of their materiality. Time is subjected to its own form of 'objectivism': time flows from objects and therefore can only be given indirectly. The signs of art, however, directly give us time as a whole. They give us eternity – not a fleeting image of eternity, as in the sensuous signs, but the whole of time as such: the virtual itself. Again, when we look back, we see that eternity was always already there from the start:

> In every instance, on the higher line, we recover what remained lost on the others. It is as if the lines of time broke off and fit into each other. [. . .] Time itself is serial; each aspect of time is now itself a term of the absolute series and refers to a Self [. . .]. The primordial time of art imbricates all the different kinds of time; the absolute Self of art encompasses all the different kinds of Self. (*PS*, p.88)

This passage brings to light a dimension of the apprenticeship which tends to remain more or less hidden throughout: the apprentice himself. Here we discover that when the three signs are subsumed under the fourth, when they are all in communication with each other in a primordial time, an absolute 'Self' enters the formula. Indeed, essence is '*something in the subject*, something like the presence of a final quality *at the heart of a subject* [my emphases]: an internal difference, "a *qualitative difference*"' [Deleuze's emphasis] (*PS*, p.41).[6] And even though Deleuze is quick to point out that essence itself is not subjective, that instead it is what constitutes the subject, he nonetheless insists that it 'does not exist outside the subject expressing it' (*PS*, p.43).[7] Further, one of the

most significant but most often ignored revelations of essence is that the other signs were never actual signs given by things in the world – real lovers, real people, and so forth – but were instead the signs that sensibility presented to the faculty which could interpret them. '[Essence] ultimately discovers what was present, but not necessarily unconscious from the beginning: that the loved beings were not autonomously functioning causes but the terms of a series proceeding within us, the *tableaux vivants* of an internal theater, the reflections of an essence' (*PS*, p.65).[8]

The central importance of subjectivity to this taxonomy of signs comes out clearly in Deleuze's discussion of their relationship to the faculties which interpret them. Each faculty, insofar as it acts voluntarily, intentionally, with a will, remains only within the realm of convention. It fails to attain the necessity required for truth, and its truths become abstract, possible truths. But as soon as the faculty is submitted to the violence of a chance encounter it takes on a 'transcendent form':

> It ceases to be interchangeable. Instead of an indifferent perception, a sensibility that apprehends and receives signs, the sign is the limit of sensibility, its vocation, its extreme exercise. Instead of a voluntary intelligence, a voluntary memory, a voluntary imagination, all these faculties appear in their involuntary transcendent form; then each one discovers that it alone can interpret, each explicates a type of sign that does it particular violence. [...] *Only the sensibility grasps the sign as such; only intelligence, memory, or imagination explicates the meaning, each according to a certain kind of sign; only pure thought discovers essence, is forced to conceive essence as the sufficient reason of the sign and its meaning*. (*PS*, pp.99–100; my emphasis; cf. p.86)

Each sign is specific to a particular faculty. It seems that sensibility is at the origin of all signs. It apprehends and receives them, and it relays the signs to the other faculties, thus raising them to their transcendent exercise (cf. *PS*, p.65).[9] The three faculties that follow explicate the signs. The type of a particular sign is determined not by something intrinsic to it, nor by what it denotes, nor by its meaning, but by the faculty, the one and only faculty, that can interpret it. This turns everything around. From this point of view we have to say that the theory of signs derives from a theory of the interpreting or affected subject, and not, as Deleuze claimed in the 'Preface to the Complete text,' from the 'signs as presented in *In Search of Lost Time*' (*PS*, p.ix). The analysis of signs no longer constitutes a *semiology*, but what Deleuze calls a *semiotics*.[10] The question now becomes: Whose subject is it? Proust's or Deleuze's?

The easiest way to answer this question is to turn to Deleuze's other great study of signs, *Cinema I* and *Cinema II*, which also refers back to the structure of a subject. If the two subjects are sufficiently similar, we can conclude that it is at least likely that the subject common to them both is not specific to either. But before moving on I want quickly to recapitulate the two main points of this reading of *Proust and Signs*.

(1) Following the path of an ascending dialectic we pass through three *material* signs and discover a fourth immaterial sign which, even though imperceptible in the material signs, once created, is found to have been there from the start.
(2) Each type of material sign corresponds to a particular fragmented line of time whereas the signs of art unite the fragments and give us time as a *whole*. In the material signs, time was fragmented because it was related to objects. In signs of art, this materiality is absent and time is given in itself.

II *Cinema I* and *Cinema II*

If Peirce's influence can be felt throughout the cinema books, it is not because Deleuze adopted the names Peirce gave to his signs (which Deleuze often puts only to a nominal use), nor because Deleuze assimilates his material subjectivity to Peirce's phenomenology (which gets so thoroughly reworked in the process that it is barely recognizable),[11] but rather because Peirce was the first to develop a convincing theory of language in relation to a phenomenology: for Peirce, each sign represents the relation of a position in communication (the object, the interpretant, or the representamen) to a moment in his phenomenology (firstness, secondness, or thirdness).[12] This provides the general outline for Deleuze's distinction between semiology and semiotics: semiology studies sign systems from the point of view of linguistics; semiotics studies non-linguistic, and in this case, phenomenological sign systems (*CII*, pp.28–34; 262).[13]

Contrary to his presentation of the signs in his book on Proust, Deleuze is much clearer in the cinema books about the way in which subjectivity determines the series of possible signs. Here there are three types of material images and one immaterial, all of which are directly 'deduced' from the movement-image. Beginning from the plane of immanence, or what Deleuze himself calls consciousness 'by right', and defines as the plane of movement-images acting on each other in all their parts and facets, Deleuze introduces an interval. In this interval, he deduces

a material subjectivity, or what he refers to as '*our* consciousness', or consciousness 'in fact' (*CI*, pp.58–61). Material subjectivity consists of three stages, each of which has its own kind of image: the perception-image, the action-image, and the affection-image. With the introduction of the fourth image, the time-image, subjectivity ceases to be material. As Deleuze says in *Cinema II*, 'Subjectivity [. . .] takes on a new sense, which is no longer motor or material, but temporal and spiritual' (*CII*, p.47). And what do we find once we have discovered the time-image except that it was already there from the start, conditioning material subjectivity: 'It took the modern cinema [defined by the advent of the time-image] to re-read the whole of cinema as already made up of aberrant movements and false continuity shots. The direct time-image is the phantom which has always haunted the cinema, but it took modern cinema to give a body to this phantom' (*CII*, p.41).[14]

We can already see basic parallels between this layout and the one in *Proust and Signs*: in both books there are three material signs and one immaterial which, once discovered, is found to have been there from the start. We can take this parallel further by noticing the way in which Deleuze describes the relationship of subjectivity to the object in the cinema books. This relation to the object, however, is not one that Deleuze tends to emphasize. In *Cinema I*, each material sign (perception, affection, and action images) is an 'avatar' of a movement-image originally located on the plane of immanence. Each kind of sign *embodies* the movement-image at a particular moment in the development of material subjectivity (*CI*, pp.61ff.). The movement-image by itself, however, is a mixture of matter and time. In *Cinema II*, for example, Deleuze writes: 'The movement-image is the object; the thing itself caught in movement as continuous function. The movement-image is the modulation of the object itself' (*CII*, p.27). And in *Cinema I* he defines movement as that which 'relates the objects between which it is established to the changing whole [time] which it expresses' (*CI*, p.11). In other words, the movement-image is the thing-in-itself, insofar as this thing is fragmented in movement and time. The plane of immanence is also the faculty of sensibility. It is what opens onto the thing itself and relays the fragmented objectivity to the other moments of subjectivity. Insofar as the other moments of subjectivity – perception, affection, and action – are embodiments or avatars of the thing in itself, they have the same structural relationship in relation to the object as the faculties in *Proust and Signs* had to sensibility.

This correspondence between the two books continues into the *temporality* of the signs. In the cinema books, just as in *Proust and Signs*, the

material images give only an indirect image of time *because they relate it to objects*.[15] Insofar as material subjectivity embodies the movement-image then it has no choice but to present time as a function of the objects to which it is wedded. It should come as no surprise then that, just as the Proustian signs of art gave us time in its entirety – not a bit of time in its pure state, which is what the sensuous signs gave us – but pure time in its entirety, so too does the time-image give us back that Whole which movement had embedded in matter.

This correlation can be carried beyond the materiality and temporality of the images into certain specific details. Take, for example, the affection-image. This image seems to share several important characteristics with the sensuous signs. Just as the sensuous signs gave us both a material *quality* and rediscovered the virtual at the heart of the material, so too does the affection-image have two poles: one which expresses a pure quality and another immersed in the 'life of the mind or spiritual non-psychological life', or, in other words, the virtual (*CI*, p.92). One could say then that the affection-image regains the virtual at the heart of the material in the same way as the sensuous signs did in Proust.

One could also take, as a second example, the action-image. This image shares several characteristics with the signs of love. There are two forms of the action-image: the large form and the small form. The large form moves from a situation to an action and returns to a modified situation. The small form begins, on the other hand, with a particular action that reveals a hidden situation (*CI*, p.160). Deleuze's examples of the small form echo what he said about the signs of love in Proust: 'Viewed from behind, Charlie, deserted by his wife, seems to be shaking with sobs, but as soon as he turns around, we see that he is in fact shaking himself a cocktail'. Perhaps even more to the point is his summary of a film by Lubitsch: a woman, for a time, is able to keep two lovers, but is eventually discovered by revealing little details which disclose the world of which they are not a part, namely, the world of the other lover (*CI*, p.161). 'It is as if', Deleuze writes, 'an action, a mode of behaviour, concealed a slight difference which was nevertheless sufficient to relate it simultaneously to two quite distant situations, situations which are worlds apart' (*CI*, p.161). Compare this to the manner in which Deleuze describes jealousy and the signs of love in *Proust and Signs*:

> [T]he beloved has a permanent knowledge of truth, does not forget it, but quickly forgets an improvised lie. The hidden thing acts within the beloved in such a way that it extracts from its context a real but insignificant detail destined to guarantee the entirety of the lie. But it

> is precisely this little detail that betrays the beloved because its angles are not adapted to the rest, revealing another origin, a participation in another system. (*PS*, p.78)

In *Cinema I* Deleuze calls this revelation of two radically different situations by a slight difference the law of the small form of the action-image. In *Proust and Signs*, he calls jealousy the law of love. In both cases a new situation is revealed by a small difference.

How far may this correspondence be taken, and can it be made more rigorous? At this point the correspondences are mostly associative, and are only possible by re-ordering the signs. The third sign in Proust corresponds to the second sign in the cinema, and vice versa. But these similarities do suggest the possibility of a strong relationship between the two books taking place entirely behind the scenes. Not only is each theory of signs developed according to the structure of a subject, but this subject seems to be common to both books and therefore specific to neither. At a very general level, the similarity is rather obvious. It seems that in both books, the series of signs is derived from a structure of subjectivity. The types of signs are clearly determined by the possibilities of a Deleuzian subject in which they are projected or embodied. This subjectivity comprises three material moments and one immaterial. Beyond this, however, there is the possibility that the correlation might carry down into the specifics. The action-image in the small form of the cinema books is very similar to the signs of love in *Proust and Signs*; the affection-image, in its simultaneous relation to material quality and virtuality, shares two important characteristics with the sensuous signs of *Proust and Signs*; the time-image seems to correspond closely to the signs of art or essence. Further, although it is difficult to point to a direct correspondence, we could conclude by elimination that the worldly signs are the 1964 equivalent of the 1983 perception-images, even though such a conclusion would only highlight what is so frustrating about this entire undertaking.

From the point of view of these two books, the Deleuzian subject remains completely vague and nearly impossible to discuss. It becomes extremely difficult to say what exactly is going on in any detail because the object of description – the structure – is always only alluded to and has no clear point of reference. Even if this is a structure of subjectivity, what kind of subjectivity is it? Is it transcendental, psychological, or ontological – to name only three points of view on subjectivity that were dominant in France during this time? We are left with a completely indeterminate and hardly worked out theory. But this indeterminacy

does have the advantage of opening up the possibility of developing a strong relationship with Deleuze's other books. Is this structure present in the other books?[16] Even better, is this what Deleuze meant by a monstrous offspring?[17] Is this twisting of Proust and cinema into a potentially coherent structure the shifting, slipping and dislocation he has in mind here? A whole series of important new questions for Deleuze criticism unfolds from this very simple possibility of a hidden and indeterminate subject determining the structure of two books separated by almost 20 years.

This points to the profound importance of Deleuze's critique of the image of thought purely as a methodological principle for readers of Deleuze. In his rejection of goodwill between thinkers in *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze highlighted one particular assumption shared by friendly philosophers: 'Friends are, in relation to one another, like minds of goodwill who are in agreement *as to the signification of things and words*; they communicate under the effect of a mutual goodwill' (*PS*, pp.94–5; my emphasis). If Deleuze overturns this paradigm, then, can we really trust him on this fundamental level – the signification of things and words? Can we even be sure of the meanings of words in Deleuze? 'Jealousy' could easily be equivalent to the burlesque, and both could refer back to a structural moment in a Deleuzian subject in which they would find their genetic definition. If Deleuze is to be taken at his word, *Proust and Signs* is a book on Proust, about Proust. It is a work of literary criticism. However, if we read him as actively manipulative, as taking Proust from behind and fathering a monstrous offspring by a subtle rearrangement, the book becomes an exposition of Deleuze's thought.[18] This is a remarkable possibility that deserves more explicit attention.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, tr. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Hereafter referred to as *PS*.
2. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.122. Author's emphases.
3. Culler goes on to claim that many of Deleuze's central insights were later confirmed by Genette in his study of Proust.
4. See Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, tr. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p.6. Hereafter referred to as *N*. Here, Deleuze refers to his previous engagements with the history of philosophy, stating that he saw this activity 'as a sort of buggery or (it comes to the same thing) immaculate conception. I saw myself as taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous'.

5. Across this first essay of *PS*, the word 'sign' becomes increasingly associated with an objective pole, and 'meaning' with a subjective. This begins on p.36 and plays an important role, for example, in the discussion of art on p.40.
6. Deleuze significantly revises this claim, but maintains the general idea: 'Essence does not exist outside the subject, but is expressed as the essence not of the subject, but of Being, or of the region of Being that is revealed to the subject' (*PS*, p.43).
7. It therefore shares fundamental properties with the notion of 'sense' as an impersonal and pre-individual transcendental field developed in *The Logic of Sense*.
8. It might be suggested that Deleuze's cinema books can unfold from this notion of an internal theatre: sensibility is the projector; the brain is the screen.
9. Deleuze will say that this is the genetic definition of a faculty (as opposed to its nominal and real definitions). See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: the Movement-Image*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p.85. Hereafter referred to as *CI*.
10. This distinction will be discussed below.
11. See *CI*, pp. 98–9, 110, 123, 198; *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp.31–2. Hereafter referred to as *CII*.
12. Of course traditionally Peirce is appreciated because he added the position of interpretant to theories of language. But this is precisely the dimension Deleuze is least interested in, calling it 'the lesser side of language'. See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, tr. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.205. Hereafter referred to as *DR*.
13. 'Phenomenological' is my characterization. All that I mean to say is that, just as in Peirce (or to an even greater degree), the signs take on their significance in relation to a structure of subjectivity rather than a linguistic structure.
14. Cf. *CI*, p.61: the interval in which subjectivity takes shape is only possible insofar as time is included in the plane of immanence.
15. This relation between time and objects is clearly related to what Deleuze calls 'the Kantian reversal of time'. See Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp.vii–viii; Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, tr. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), pp.27ff.; also *DR*, pp.86, 112. What is so interesting both here and in *PS* is that this reversal is not fully realized until the last stage of subjectivity, even if it is presupposed in the earlier stages.
16. The literature on Deleuze has never asked this question, and, indeed, is usually far away from asking the question of subjectivity in general.
17. See *N*, pp.4–7. Deleuze here describes his aim of producing 'monstrous' offspring of the philosophers and thinkers about whom he has written: in other words, to render accurately the work of these thinkers, but also to lend it a new shape. See note 4 above.
18. From this point of view, James Reid's chapter in this volume, which tries to locate as precisely as possible the differences between Proust's thought and Deleuze's presentation of it, becomes extremely important.

5

Proust/Deleuze: Mnemosyne, Goddess or Factory?

Philippe Mengue (Translated from the French by Mary Bryden)

I shall submit the subject of this volume, which assembles three great thinkers of the twentieth century, Proust, Deleuze and Beckett, to the authority of the tragic wisdom underlying this maxim by Nietzsche: 'Giants call out to one another across the intercalary spaces of time; indifferent to the mischievous and noisy dwarves squealing out beneath them, they pursue their sublime spiritual dialogue'.[1] If tragic wisdom is able to comprehend, within the divisions that preoccupy the minds of thinkers, 'the stellar friendship'[2] which brings them together, one must not soar off too hastily towards the 'invisible bridge which links one genius to another'.[3] However, out of respect for tragic thought, I shall assert that it is necessary to be able to excavate the differences which tear them apart, since it is true that the only bridge available is over an abyss of *chaos*. The requirements of tragic thought, the legacy of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, which permeate the young Beckett's masterly analysis of Proust, force us to reawaken a sense of *agon*, of *polemos*.

It is within this perspective that this chapter positions itself. It aims to excavate differences, bring out disagreements, in the Lyotardian sense. As my title indicates, the gulf between giants, over which we shall try to throw a bridge, will be that of memory, and of the bottomlessness which constitutes it. However, in order to understand what is at stake in this problem, and to interrogate the role of criticism and literature, I must first excavate the differences and trace the becomings proper to each of the two authors I am foregrounding, namely Deleuze and Proust.

I The Deleuzian geology of Proust

We must begin with the fact that *Proust et les signes* went through three different editions, which form, as it were, three strata:

1. The edition of 1964 comprises only that which forms the first part of the 1975 edition, together with its conclusion, 'The Image of Thought'.
2. The second edition, from 1970, adds to the foregoing a very long chapter, Chapter VIII, entitled, significantly, 'Antilogos, or the Literary Machine', the conclusion remaining the same as that of 1964.
3. The 1975 edition adds a new conclusion, 'The Spider', displacing the 1964 conclusion at the end of the first part, the lengthy Chapter VIII becoming the second part.

What is being played out here? It is not simply a case of stacking things up, but, as we shall see, a reversal of the principle of reading. The major fracture comes about with the second edition. Deleuze introduces the determining concept of 'literary machine', which will lend its name to the second part of the last edition, and which arises as a title-within-a-title, in opposition to the title of the first part, 'Signs'. To be precise, it is no longer signs that are the central Deleuzian problematic, but machines. Hence, we read: '[L]a *Recherche* est une machine [...]. [L]'oeuvre d'art moderne est une machine, et fonctionne à ce titre. [...] L'oeuvre d'art moderne n'a pas de problème de sens, elle n'a qu'un problème d'usage' [[T]he *Recherche* is a machine. [...]. [T]he modern work of art is a machine, and functions as such. [...] The modern work of art does not have problems of meaning, only problems of usage]. Thus, the work of modern art constitutes 'une machinerie dont le sens (tout ce que vous voudrez) dépend uniquement du fonctionnement, et le fonctionnement des pièces détachées.[4] [a machinery whose meaning (whatever you want) depends solely on functioning, and the functioning of its spare parts].

A sign and a machine, these are by no means the same thing; a reversal has taken place. An irreparable rift has developed. The sign signifies, it is the carrier of a determined meaning which can, of course, be multiple, ambiguous, but which cannot be just anything. The machine produces, it poses no problem of meaning, it functions, the thing 'needs to work', that's all there is to it. It doesn't convey any meaning. The *Recherche*, then, is no longer 'recherche de la Vérité' (*PSI*, p.21) [the search for Truth] – as Deleuze was still maintaining in 1964. The truth is no longer 'discovery', is no longer thought as passageway to the timeless

essence beyond the perceptible material coating in which it appears, as Proust never stops telling us.[5] Deleuze gets to the point of affirming the complete opposite, truth having by 1970 become an effect, a product:

> Proust refuse avec tant de force l'état d'une vérité qui ne serait pas produite, mais seulement découverte; [...] La *Recherche* est bien production de la vérité cherchée. (*PS*, pp.159 & 161)
>
> [Proust refuses so forcefully the condition of a truth which would not be produced, but merely discovered; [...] The *Search* is certainly production of the sought-after truth].

From 1970, then, everything is in place to set this difference of emphasis in direct opposition to the reading of 1964. Even if this opposition remains muted and covert, it is certainly there, and is to spring into prominence in 1975, with the appearance of *Kafka*. At that time, he will say, it is absolutely necessary to prevent 'l'introduction de l'ennemi, le Signifiant, et les tentatives pour interpréter une oeuvre qui ne se propose en fait qu'à l'expérimentation'[6] [the introduction of the enemy, the Signifier, and any attempt to interpret a work which in fact presents itself merely as an experiment]. From the *Anti-Oedipus* of 1972 and afterwards, this criticism was to encompass psychoanalysis with all the virulence with which we are now familiar, and was to focus on one target: the systematic critique of interpretation. Now for Proust, and for the Deleuze of 1964, the interpretation of signs was the paradigmatic act of the writer:

Proust: 'Le devoir et la tâche d'un écrivain sont ceux d'un traducteur' (*RTP*, p.890) [The duty and task of a writer are those of a translator];

Deleuze in 1964: 'Chercher la vérité, c'est interpréter, déchiffrer, expliquer' (*PSI*, p.23) [To seek truth is to interpret, to decipher, to explain].

What can explain such a rift in the Deleuzian problematic, and what could have instigated such a reversal? I have already demonstrated in my study of the relationship between Deleuze and democracy[7] that we are obliged to take account of what was, in the elaboration of the Deleuzian system, a real break, and one which was to provoke a real sea change, in relation to the earlier Deleuzian thinking which culminated in *Logique du sens* and *Différence et Répétition*, published in 1968–69. This rupture, this reversal, was provoked by the May '68 events and their aftermath in France, as well as the encounter with the psychoanalyst and militant Trotskyite Félix Guattari. With the advent of the first plan for revolutionary and anti-Stalinist Marxism, the overturning of the

meaning and value of interpretation was inevitable, since, as we know, it was now a question not of interpreting the world but of transforming it, according to Marx's celebrated maxim which appears in his VIIth Thesis on Feuerbach.

In these conditions, and if we are not mistaken, how can we explain why this tension, close to contradiction, is not manifest in the 1970 *Proust et les signes*? Or why Deleuze felt no need to delete or deny the 1964 version? We need to retrace the overall movement of his thinking, to see how the two opposing versions fit together and how their momentary juncture operates without too much jarring. It is here that we shall encounter the problem of memory.

II The restoration of the goddess Mnemosyne

According to Hesiod, Mnemosyne is herself, at least as a goddess, a *chaoid*, a titaness who predated Kronos. Mother, by Zeus, of the nine Muses, she is in the first place the daughter of Uranus and Gaia, who is herself a direct descendant (*Theogony*, v.116), without coition, of *Chaos*, the primordial gaping abyss, and the primary term in the whole *Theogony*. Mnemosyne, through her father and mother, thus plunges into gaping bottomlessness, thereby endowing the mind with the same fathomless openness. It is for this reason that, as we will recall, she is the mother of the arts.

As early as 1964, Deleuze had made the first revolutionary move by rejecting the authority of Hesiod, with his rendering of Memory as a divine power, as being relevant to the understanding of the *Recherche*. He had brought to the fore the signs detrimental to memory,[8] which, with its involuntary reminiscences, was supplying the stock-in-trade of the Proust industry. That was his big idea in 1964 (which went down well at a time of all-conquering structuralism). The unity of the *Recherche*, he was asserting, 'ne consiste pas dans la mémoire, dans le souvenir, même involontaire. L'essentiel de la *Recherche* n'est pas dans la madeleine ou les pavés' (*PSI*, 3rd sentence) [is not grounded in memory, in recollection, even involuntary. The main thing in the *Recherche* is not the madeleine or the cobblestones].

For Deleuze, it was necessary to wrest memory away from its divine aspect, and direct it wholly towards the aspect of language and its signs. The basis of the mind, of Psyche, is no longer Mnemosyne, but is to be found entirely on the surface where the play of signs takes place. Now, as we know, Proust has recourse, in two rich passages, to noble and elevated readings of Hesiod. For both of them, Mnemosyne is the mother of the

Muses and hence of all the arts. And the blessing proper to the daughters of Mnemosyne, even if it is not a Proustian joy of time regained in a form of eternity, resides in forgetting suffering and mourning through 'the celebration of the lofty deeds of men of old or of the blessed gods' (*Theogony*, vv. 95–105). Song makes mortals immortal, and succeeds in preserving time. By means of this genealogical reading divinizing Memory – which is shared entirely by Proust, even if he does not express it in these terms – the arts anchor themselves in the centre of the being, and therefore arise from something loftier than mankind. Now, this is exactly what is fiercely denied by that modernity to which Deleuze adheres.[9]

Samuel Beckett, like any unprepared reader, made no mistake about it, for that matter. In his fine study of 1931,[10] under the auspices of tragic thought, he restores to the Proustian experience, contrary to Deleuze, its ontological and religious dimension. In accordance with Proust's texts, he associates the reminiscences of involuntary memory with explicitly evangelical terms, such as 'visitation', and 'annunciation' (*P*, p.38). On that basis, he is drawn to make of it a 'mystic experience' (*P*, p.35): 'He is to [. . .] suffer a religious experience in the only intelligible sense of that epithet, at once an assumption and an annunciation' (*P*, p.69). In particular, music – like memory, from which it is indissociable – gives access to 'waves of rapture' (*P*, p.70). For Proust, according to Beckett, there could be no question at all of an 'experimentation'. Still less could these reminiscences derive from a 'machine à produire des résonances' [resonance production machine], which, for example, 'découvrirait son plein régime' [would reveal its maximum speed] (*PS*, p.167) during the morning at the Guermantes's house, with their multiplication, as Deleuze very prosaically puts it, within his pragmatic perspective.

To conclude this point, it is true that there is no special status that would confer superiority on memory, even involuntary memory, as Deleuze rightly avers. But in that respect, neither in Proust is there any demotion of memory in favour of signs, since the latter, whether they be signs of art or of the perceived world, are elevated to the divine dignity accorded to Mnemosyne. In effect, reminiscences, works of art and sensory impressions have an analogous function – that of being the expression of something more real than the reality of daily life and the opinion which reveals it to us. They allow us to gain access to their 'équivalent profond' [deep equivalent], to 'la réalité supérieure' [superior reality], and to a 'réalité spirituelle' [spiritual reality] (*RTP*, 375), to the very 'essence' of things, as Proust says. In this way, we find an explanation for the joy experienced by the narrator at each encounter with these sorts of signs. This joy is none other than that of access to true reality,

'la joie du réel retrouvé' (*RTP*, p.879) [the joy of the rediscovered real], contact with the ultimate and eternal being, who lends imperishability to the spirit of the one who contemplates, and makes of him/her, for a moment, 'le citoyen d'une patrie inconnue' (*RTP*, p.257)[11] [the citizen of an unknown fatherland]. The joy experienced is, therefore, that of a call to a supra-terrestrial destiny (*RTP*, p.261), and the privilege of art, over sensory signs and reminiscences, is to be able to 'fix' – whether it be by prolonging, maintaining, reproducing, at will – these moments of eternity. Far from being 'produced', as Deleuze maintains in 1970 when he writes that 'ces instants deviennent l'effet d'une machine littéraire' (*PS*, p.166) [these moments become effects of a literary machine], these moments owe their privileged status to the umbilical cord which links them to an independent, extra-temporal reality, not produced by our own processes, even unconscious and involuntary ones. Deleuze in 1970, no longer wishing to recognize the mystic dimension of the Proustian experience, reduces it to the immanence of a textual process:

> Il ne s'agit plus d'une expérience extra-littéraire que l'homme de lettres rapporte [. . .] mais d'une expérimentation artistique produite par la littérature, d'un effet de littérature, au sens où l'on parle d'un effet électrique, électro-magnétique, etc. C'est le cas où jamais de dire: cela fonctionne. (*PS*, p.167)
>
> [What the literary writer brings is no longer a matter of an extra-literary experience [. . .] but of an artistic experiment produced by literature, of an effect of literature, in the sense in which we speak of an electrical, electro-magnetic effect, etc. This is the case, if ever there was one, in which we can say: this is functioning.]

I do not have space here to cite all the passages which confirm the rightness of this Beckettian reading of Proust,[12] which goes counter to the Deleuzian functionalism. Vinteuil, for example, has 'dévoilé' [revealed] the little phrase more than he has created it, Deleuze was still saying in 1964,[13] in perfect harmony with Proust (*RTP*, pp. 349–51), for whom the little phrase in a real sense exists in an order of spiritual creatures (*RTP*, p.351). Vinteuil has gone to this other spiritual world in order to capture it. Neither he nor his musical machine has produced it. One can only 'discover', or 'invent', in the etymological sense, what is, partly and in essence, anterior to us, endowed with an independent reality. The work of art is not schizoid, its meaning cut off from all relation with reality or being. It is on this condition alone – that of an anterior revelation of the existence of an otherness or an Outside, even if internal or

intimate – that works of art can be thought to allow us access to 'la contemplation de l'essence des choses' (*RTP*, p.876) [the contemplation of the essence of things], to 'notre vraie vie' (*RTP*, p.881) [our real life], to 'la réalité telle que nous l'avons sentie' (*RTP*, p.881) [the reality such as we have felt it], and lead us joyfully to an eternity as transitory as it is inalterable. Thus, one will not hold that the work of art, which 'pre-exists', and which we must 'discover' (*RTP*, p.881) may be reduced to 'a mental game' or to formal techniques. It speaks to us of something else, it is not an end in itself, and its meaning does not amount simply to its internal functioning, since the work opens up to an external or internal otherness:

> [C]e livre essentiel, le seul livre vrai, un grand écrivain n'a pas, dans le sens courant, à l'inventer, puisqu'il existe déjà en chacun de nous, mais à le traduire. Le devoir et la tâche d'un écrivain sont ceux d'un traducteur. (*RTP*, p.890)
>
> [A great writer does not have to invent, in the normal sense of the term, this essential book, the only true book, since it already exists in each one of us, but rather to translate it. The duty and task of a writer are those of a translator].

The writer as translator[14] deciphers the hieroglyphics of the 'livre intérieur'[15] in the direction of the spiritual reality of which they are the expression. For it is certain, adds Proust, in connection with Vinteuil's little phrase:

> qu'elle appartenait à un ordre de créatures immortelles et que nous n'avons jamais vues, mais que malgré cela nous reconnaissons avec ravissement quand quelque explorateur de l'invisible arrive à en capter une, à l'amener, du monde divin où il a accès, briller quelques instants au-dessus du nôtre. (*RTP*, p.351)
>
> [that it belonged to an order of immortal creatures which we have never seen, but which we nevertheless rapturously recognize when some explorer of the invisible manages to capture one, and to bring it from the divine world to which he has access, to shine for a few moments above our own world].

Let us leave the matter there, with so explicit a passage that it does not brook contestation. One may thereby perceive the true extent of Deleuze's brazen cheek, as well as the distortion he applies to the text when he coolly declares: 'c'est pourquoi Proust *refuse avec tant de force* l'état d'une vérité qui ne serait pas produite, mais seulement découverte'

(*PS*, p.159) [that is why Proust *so forcefully refuses* the statement of a truth which would not be produced, but simply discovered] [my emphasis].

III From factory to spider

A great tension permeates, then, Deleuze's reading of Proust. On the one hand we have the Deleuze of 1964, fairly faithful to Proust, who tones down, without refuting, the idealist and mystical aesthetic of the *Recherche*, and, on the other hand, we have the structural-functionalist Deleuze of the 1970s who absorbs into the concept of the literary machine the whole mystic-religious system of the *Recherche*. Given this, how is it that the opposition I have been emphasizing is not clearly evident? To resolve this question, we must go back to the ambiguity inherent in the structure of the sign.

– On the one hand, as in Proust, the sign associated with memory draws up vertically, from below, something which was tucked away, hidden, secretly buried, covered up, and forgotten, but was always pre-existent in relation to the act of discovery. We are in the world of Appearance, Revelation, Announcement, and, as with every reminiscence worthy of the name, we are still close to the sacred mystery, the unveiling of the Truth, the *A-letheia*.

– However, on the other hand, the sign is only interpretable by means of work which is no longer a sudden, direct, vertical link, but is that of Mnemosyne. It is thus possible to turn signs towards another theoretical horizon. A sign is always bound to a signifying space, annexed in its difference and repetition to other signs with which it establishes horizontal significance, with which it is plaited, knotted, woven. Thus it enters into the composition of what we literally – and in accordance with the Latin etymology of the term – call a *text*.

And so we see that the sign can be interpreted either symbolically, in the manner of Plato and Proust, or structurally, in the manner of de Saussure and the Deleuze of 1970. The concept of sign therefore supplies the turntable, the space of slippage which permits passage from one Deleuzian layer to another. If one can make the sign turn back towards a hidden meaning it would hold within like an extra-temporal Essence which it would symbolize, one can also, just as easily, make of this meaning a signification produced by the text and its signifying process. In 1970, with the concept of the literary machine, one recognized the possible affiliation between Deleuze's reading and that of the textualists, such as Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva, whose central concept is that of the 'Signifier', still no doubt understood in relation to the Freudian

unconscious, and to what was believed to be the structuralist theory of Lacan, but was already also conceived as a production process. The signs could, then, for Deleuze in 1970,[16] 'still' swing to the side of machines and production processes.

Nevertheless, in this movement of un-deifying memory, one boulder remained. It was already somewhat crumbling, but was still prone to block the process of wholesale mechanization: this was the 'Subject', in the form of the narrator, who remained in something approaching supremacy and unbroached mastery with regard to his/her work. After the signifier, it was therefore necessary to demolish the subject in favour of a new machinery. This was the role of the third stratum, and of the 1975 conclusion, 'Presence and function of madness: The Spider'. The narrator, close to the author in what can pass for a kind of autobiography, and a formative, initiatory novel, according to naïve or symbolist readings, is transformed through Deleuze's inspired intervention into a monstrous spider who traps in her immobilizing threads every creature she meets, reducing their memory to nothing more than a vibration in the threads of her web. The narrator becomes 'a huge body-without-organs' (*PSIII*, p.218), in the Artaudian sense.

We will not dispute the brilliance of this Deleuzian creation, light years away from the awareness the narrator has of himself and of his vocation as a writer, since it is no doubt just as open-ended and fruitful as the old-style reading, a cross between Plato and Leibniz, in which Proust himself operates and conceives of himself. Within this new perspective, which was to develop from 1972 in *Anti-Oedipus*, and then in 1975 in *Kafka*, art becomes a machine for capturing forces at work in the world. These forces to be captured are invisible, and art's entire work is to make them visible. Art is 'to make perceptible forces which are not', it is said in the study on Bacon.[17] Text being a machine and no longer a theatre, a reflexive and signifying scene of representation, literature can be stripped of all its mental dimension of interiority and intimacy, which it retains in Proust, in favour of external, social and political realities, with which it 'engineers' its connection. It is a factory. Art no longer either seizes extra-temporal essence or supplies the perceptible materials for its enfleshment – tasks which Deleuze, with Proust, used to recognize in 1964. It must seize the historico-social power at work in time and attempt to connect them in the production of new syntheses. Experimentation has definitively supplanted interpretation, and has taken on a totally and unconditionally political meaning.

So much for the archaeology of the text, with its different strata and the movement that traverses them.

IV The Deleuzian dilemma

Yet if we think about it, the situation Deleuze finds himself confronted with is very awkward. It involves his relationship with truth and the status of critical activity. In fact, he is facing an alternative, or rather a dilemma, and one cannot see which 'disjunctive synthesis' could come along to soften this hard-edged dualism of contrary positions.

– Either, in the face of the indisputable instructions of the text, he recognized its interpretation as inaccurate, or rather 'transformative', and there is no card left to play other than that of creative misinterpretation, that of innovating difference and differential repetition. The critic is no longer anxious for truth, but is under an obligation to produce displacement or decentring, providing that it be productive, that is to say capable of opening up other lines of reading which are virtually present in the work. The play of difference as shift and destabilization is explicitly assumed and legitimated in the idea of a creative critic who blends into a new work. What Deleuze calls the 'clinical' wins the day over the critical. 'Literature is a health',[18] it is said, and the object of the clinical is seen to be defined as the invention of new possibilities of life (*CC*, p.15). It is not so much a matter of saying true things about a work as of detecting in it its arrangements of signs and the internal trends of its becomings, its primordial 'slopes' and 'declines' which carry the other lines along with them, without being subjugated to the letter of the text.[19] But with a concept such as this, which acts as a clinician of criticism, one is drawn to reconstruct the work, and one quickly abandons any reference to the philological truth, as we have just seen with 'Proustism'. As people will acknowledge, this is extremely awkward, when one wishes to produce a critical study which is in conformity with the canons in force in the world of knowledge.

– Or, faithful to traditional critical rigour – and this second option is also present in Deleuze's study which also fancies itself to be truthful – Deleuze maintains, on the contrary, the truth and correctness of his reading, but then finds himself in a position of superiority (spatial and moral, by arrogance) and of transcendence vis-à-vis the work, since he knows it better than the narrator himself. Reading Deleuze would thus teach us that the narrator, who is unaware of his real practice, is mistaken about himself and that the *Recherche*, which is much more modern and avant-garde than the narrator thinks, eludes the classical, platonic vision which the narrator falsely believes to be at work.

However, if he thus redeems his reading, according to the truth, he then finds himself unfaithful to his principle of immanence, falling back

into the overhanging situation of the presumptuous critic and the status of the sovereign subject, which he otherwise subjects to public ridicule. From this analysis, I will draw out one fundamental difficulty affecting the literary critic: can s/he definitively do without interpreting? And, if not, is it not better, in preference to denying the fact, to try to elaborate the rules and legitimacy of it, as Lacan tried to do, as someone who, like Deleuze, recognized that the artist precedes the psychoanalyst?[20]

V Literature and the abyss

In the face of the fine, discriminating and crafty constructions of Deleuze, I cannot help wondering, mainly about two questions with which I shall end.

1. What is the 'literary', literature? And especially in the case that concerns us: can the literary machine function and remain 'literary' without something that is *beyond the machine*, and which the machine cannot produce? This line of questioning may be inflected in many ways, following the different modes of conceptualization of this extra-machinic real. After the structuralo-functionalist heyday which, for the most part, we have just been contemplating, and after *Kafka*, Deleuze embraces a critique of the signifier and abandons all linguistic models. He wants to bring the machine into direct relationship with the 'outside'. He presents as characteristic of the machine the heterogeneity of its parts and its connection to a-signifying forces (he now speaks of rhizomes and assemblages...).

But the entire question, in the realm of art, is to find out whether this Deleuzian outside, devoid of transcendence, wholly in immanence, may constitute a genuine outside.[21] For example, for Proust, it is clear that the 'outside', the extradiscursive, implies a form of transcendence or a principle of rupture, of rift. For him, there cannot be literature without something resembling a call, or, if you like, without a meaning that is not reducible to a signification, a message, or a social effect of relevance to the collectivity. Thus, there would be for him no literature without the equivalent of Mnemosyne, or something like the Muses. We can measure the extent to which projects of radical immanentism are fragile and difficult. Without this indivisible and irreducible aspect, literature seems in effect to be incapable of escaping the following dilemma:

– Either, on the one hand, literature consists of formalism in writing, of stylistic operations, and the meaning is reduced to a self-referential functioning; but in that case the result is that it gets to the point of losing the world and losing its life. Proust used to dread that terribly. Let us think

back to what he said about Wagner's talent: if he had to acknowledge that all his music was due to technical forms and operations, he would no longer regret not being an artist, art being beyond spiritual or ontological reach of revelation.

– Or, on the other hand – and in order to deal with the previous danger – literature is oriented towards the realism of political commitment. According to this orientation, if literature has really returned to the world and is at its best in that pursuit, it gets bogged down in it, reducing the work to a political message. Proust lucidly denounced that illusion, across many pages of the *Recherche*. He experiences the greatest doubt about the value of literature – 'moins chargée de réalité que je n'avais cru' [less burdened with reality than I had believed][22] – if literature was to be reduced to that of objectivity and struggle. This conception, says Proust, in reality constitutes an excuse to shy away from the essential task we face as writers:[23] that is, the expression of an individuating Essence which is at the root of the unique and singular world that surrounds us and which we alone can explain and unfold.[24]

2. My second question is to clarify and participate in the first, by advancing the idea of 'letter', in a sense approximate to that in which Lacan uses it. The effect of the meaning would be linked to the letter, would be inseparable from the effect of a gap or opening, from something which is gap or impossibility. And this gap would be irreducible to the functional and purely 'machinic' void which Deleuze and Guattari assign to the 'body-without-organs' of Artaud. It is on the side of rift, of openness, that something real, beyond machine, beyond signifier, can be found, or 'encountered'. This orientation I am sketching out is not at all anti-Deleuzian, at least if the Deleuze of before *Anti-Oedipus* is still considered to be Deleuzian.

In *Logique du sens*, Deleuze had recognized this necessity and put Meaning, insofar as it is irreducible to linguistic signification and designation, in correlation with an abyss effect. The lines of flight were at that point not simply reducible to machinic conjunctions and to connections in assemblages. Ecstasies and resonances vibrated then over the abyss of nonsense and fathomlessness. Something of the mystery of the call, or of the unconscious, we might say, was still being heard and preserved. But with the concept of machine, Deleuze abandons the '*logic of sense*' for a *pragmatics of forces* which refuses all interpretation.

No doubt, according to this latter perspective, Deleuze would reject the accusation of presumptuousness on the part of the interpreter and would firmly refuse to countenance the questions I am singling out, on the grounds of his slogan: 'Don't interpret, experiment', and of his

conception of the book as a 'tool box'.[25] He would defend the extremely pragmatic idea that his study, with its successive strata, must not be envisaged as a succession of interpretations of Proust's work, but as attempts to capture its forces, to experiment in and with them the lines of life and flight that it helps to trace, the 'becomings' that it sets in motion and provokes. . . . But this argument, which cannot be attacked – and which is adopted precisely so that it cannot be – seems to me to desert too readily the axis or the dimension of truth.

In my eyes, and to conclude, the machinic pragmatism called upon by Deleuze and his disciples cannot in itself function without the non-pragmatic truth of openness, and what it carves out in thought. If Proust in fact authorizes a pluralism of points of view by presenting his work to us as a possible telescope for viewing the world,[26] his pragmatism, like that of Nietzsche, is limited by the tragic, not relative, truth to which he adheres. It is because we float over the abyss that, in order to cross the Chaos, we don eyeglasses which will doubtless be different, fortuitous, contingent and constraining. They will be more or less productive of 'truths', as Deleuze emphasizes, in that respect demonstrating fidelity to Proust. However, for Proust, these different optical instruments are at the service of truths which are both 'objective', or irrevocably given, and unique, singular, at the origin of a world peculiar to each person. These truths are the discovery of an interior and unique truth which expresses a participation in the ultimate real, encountered and tested as a primary datum, and not produced even by our machines (unconscious or not) of desire, as a phantasm with no hold over the creature would be. What cannot *not* have the status of ultimate truth (and not a simple effect of optics or perspective) is the fact that we sail over the abyss of time and the gulf of death: in other words, the unique thought of the entire *Recherche*, and its tragic truth, its point of reference, which is beyond machinic production.

Thus, in parodying Nietzsche on the subject of Heraclitus, and under the auspices of the tragic thought which we were evoking earlier and which we now finally come back to, Proust, like both Beckett as well as Deleuze, each 'sera éternellement fondé à dire' [will have eternal grounds to say][27] what he says, to propose interpretations that are multiple, divergent, and without the possibility of reconciliation, since the openness in thought that opens up the possibility of these multiplicities is itself boundless and is the only non-pragmatic truth we hold in our possession. The irreducible pluralism of worlds and essences, which is at the heart of Proust's and Deleuze's thought, has meaning only if it bases itself on the tragic gulf which the great Presocratic thinkers once and for all opened out into thought.

Notes

1. 'Les géants s'interpellent à travers les vides intercalaires du temps; indifférents aux nains mutins et bruyants qui piaillent au dessous d'eux, ils poursuivent leur sublime dialogue spirituel' [The giants call out to one another across the intercalary voids of time; indifferent to the mischievous and noisy dwarves who screech beneath them, they pursue their sublime spiritual dialogue]: Friedrich Nietzsche, 1875 Introduction to *La Philosophie à l'époque de la tragédie grecque,* in *Oeuvres philosophiques complètes*, Vol.I (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), p.215.
2. 'l'amitié stellaire' [stellar friendship]: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Le Gai savoir*, in *Oeuvres philosophiques complètes*, Vol.V (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p.179.
3. 'pont invisible qui relie un génie à un autre génie' [invisible bridge linking one genius to another]: Friedrich Nietzsche, fragment from autumn 1872. See Vol. II, *Oeuvres philosophiques complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), p.173.
4. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: PUF, 1970), pp.157–9. Hereafter referred to as *PS*. Within this chapter, *PS* refers to the 1970 edition. The 1964 and 1975 editions are denoted by *PSI* and *PSIII* respectively.
5. See Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), Vol. III, p.881 (hereafter referred to as *RTP*) for the term 'découvrir' [discover].
6. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1975), p.7.
7. Philippe Mengue, *Deleuze et le problème de la démocratie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003).
8. See chapter 5 of the 1964 version, entitled 'Rôle secondaire de la mémoire' [Secondary role of memory].
9. See *PS*, pp.165–7.
10. Samuel Beckett, *Proust*, in *Proust, and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: John Calder, 1965), tr. into French by Edith Fournier (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1990). Hereafter referred to as *P*.
11. Cf. the angel fallen into this world (*RTP*, p.258).
12. It is sufficient to re-read the magnificent passage in *Le Temps retrouvé*, pp. 874–5, where there is an abundance of terms as religious as they are mystical, where the subject gets to the point, in the ecstasy of a 'vision ineffable' [ineffable vision] of 'perdre connaissance' (*RTP*, p.875) [losing consciousness].
13. Cf. *PS*, p.53.
14. See also *RTP*, p.879.
15. See: 'le livre aux caractères figurés, *non tracés par nous*, est notre seul livre' (*RTP*, p.880) [the book with figurative characters, *not drawn by us*, is our only book] [author's emphasis]. If this book were not 'le reflet d'une réalité plus qu'humaine' [the reflection of a more than human reality] and were simply the 'produit d'un labeur industrieux' (*RTP*, p.162) [product of industrious labour], if art were nothing more than that, then the narrator would feel no regret in not becoming an artist.
16. This would no longer be possible after *Kafka*, and the uncompromising critique of the signifier. The literary machine would lose all links with the text, the structure.

17. See Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002), p.57.
18. See, of course, Gilles Deleuze, *Critique et clinique* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1993), p.9. Hereafter referred to as *CC*.
19. See Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977), pp.142–3.
20. See Jacques Lacan's study of Marguerite Duras in *Autres Ecrits* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2001), p.191.
21. This is a weighty question which in the first place brings into play the very notion of radical immanence and the refusal of all discontinuity which it implies. The idea of a Real, which is a-symbolizing, a genuine 'outside', seems unable to be dissociated from a fundamental discontinuity. Can the Deleuzian real, thought as multiplicity of 'forces', or even as intensive chaos, constitute an 'Outside'? On the contrary, it seems that, in abolishing the heterogeneity of the domains of the symbolic and of the real, in favour of an ontology of the modulation of intensities, one abolishes all possibility of radical alterity, and embraces a world without Other.
22. See *RTP*, p.862; and *PS*, p.43.
23. That is, to see the critique of political commitment as a temptation to evade the hard work of deciphering the 'internal book' in which 'no one could help me' by invoking the need to focus one's energies, for example, on the Dreyfus affair: 'How many tasks do we not take on in order to avoid that particular one! Each event, whether it was the Dreyfus affair, or the war, had provided further excuses for writers not to decipher that particular book; they wished to ensure the triumph of the Right, to rebuild the moral unity of the nation, they had no time to think about literature' (*RTP*, p.879).
24. See, with fear of a fatal accident, the realization of the absolute uniqueness of the raw materials for the work ('the rich minefield') and of its author ('the one who exploits the seam'): 'I was the only person capable of doing it. For two reasons: my death would represent the passing not only of the only miner capable of extracting the minerals, but, more than that, of the seam itself' (*RTP*, p.1037). The genius, says Proust, resides not in the content of the work, but, as is the case with Vinteuil, in 'the unknown property of a unique world, which no other musician had revealed to us'. This is why the 'spiritual reality' with which the work communicates, being absolutely singular, is not of the order of a general essence, as in Plato, but rather of a 'monad', in the Leibnizian sense, as Deleuze underlines so pertinently (*PS*, pp.52 and 178).
25. See Gilles Deleuze, *Rhizome* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1976), p.72. This pragmatism is attributed explicitly to Proust, who 'used to say that his book was like eyeglasses [...]. In a book there is nothing to understand, but much to make use of'.
26. See *RTP*, pp.911 and 1033, cited by Deleuze (*PS*, p.157).
27. Friedrich Nietzsche, 'La raison dans la philosophie', in *Le Crépuscule des idoles*, *Oeuvres philosophiques complètes,* Vol.VIII (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p.76.

6

Deleuze, Leibniz, Proust and Beckett: Thinking in Literature

Anthony Uhlmann

The problem of the image of thought occurs at important moments within Deleuze's works, yet it is not always at the forefront of his ideas. In *Negotiations*, Deleuze indicates that *Difference and Repetition* 'is really about the nature of the postulates of the image of thought', and that he 'comes back to it in *Proust and Signs*, because Proust confronts the Greek image with all the power of signs'.[1] The chronology is somewhat distorted in these comments: the concept, in fact, is first mentioned in *Nietzsche et la Philosophie* (1962), then again in the shorter first edition of *Proust and Signs*, *Proust et les Signes* (1964), before appearing in *Différence et Répétition* (1968). Yet the concept is more fully developed in *Difference and Repetition* and *Proust and Signs*, which both have chapters entitled 'The Image of Thought'.

These two chapters offer us views of two faces of this concept, one positive and the other negative. In *Difference and Repetition*, we are shown a negative image of thought, a dogmatic image of thought which has been dominant within philosophy since Plato, and which, rather than opening up potentials for thought, closes them down. It does this, in part, by standing as a shared assumption: the idea that all reasonable people will think in the same way. In *Proust and Signs*, on the other hand, we are shown how Proust develops an image of thought in opposition to that which dominates philosophy, a new image of thought that challenges our idea of what it means to think and opens up possibilities for thinking. One might wonder whether it is an accident that the shift from constraint to the opening of possibilities passes through a reading of literature, or whether, in effect, Deleuze in part develops or extracts elements of the positive face of the idea in the first instance from his reading of Proust. That is, even though the positive potential of the image of thought was already present in the use made of this idea in *Nietzsche*

and Philosophy, this idea already carried with it a shift in thinking which might be termed 'aesthetic', with Nietzsche understood as moving away from the ground of 'truth' to that of 'sense' and 'value'.[2]

Both the positive and negative images are, paradoxically, Platonic. In *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze indicates how Proust's understanding of what it means to think is drawn from a passage in Book VII of *The Republic*, where Plato describes two kinds of object: the first is readily recognized; we respond to this object and it affects us in a manner we have come to expect. The second kind of object is unfamiliar, it troubles us and asks us actively to think. The passage from Plato is as follows: 'The experiences that do not provoke thought are those that do not at the same time issue in a contradictory perception. Those that do [provoke thought] I set down as provocatives'.[3] Deleuze refers to the same passage in *Difference and Repetition*, but here he emphasizes how Plato immediately undermines this notion of provocation by answering it with a new recognition. Plato explains away the image that provokes us with reference to pre-existing forms that we dimly remember from a life above, where we have met them as eternal ideas.[4]

Yet, on Deleuze's reading, Proust's Platonism only goes so far, and he does not link the provocation to a new recognition; rather, he puts forward an artistic image of thought which challenges the dogmatic image of thought. This dogmatic image of thought is, in effect, based upon recognition, the goodwill of thinkers who are in agreement with regard to what things are and what they mean; thinkers who, as friends of wisdom, openly share the truth. The Proustian image, on the other hand, requires no such goodwill: the truth is not openly revealed; rather, it is 'betrayed', appearing (on the face of the unfaithful loved one, for example) within involuntarily projected signs that require interpretation. It relates to Plato's object that provokes us to think: what is most important to thought is what is 'food for thought'. Deleuze concludes that 'to think therefore is to interpret, is therefore to translate'.[5]

What is at stake in thinking?

In order fully to understand Deleuze's reading of the potentials of literature, and the ideas he develops in this regard through his interest in Marcel Proust and Samuel Beckett, it is necesssary first to understand Deleuze's interest in the work of the seventeenth-century philosopher Leibniz. Deleuze contends in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*[6] and in his second cinema book (*The Time-Image*), that Leibniz's conception of incompossibility as outlined in sections 414–16 of *Theodicy* is 'a source

of all modern literature'.[7] Further, in *The Fold*, Deleuze points out that Leibniz states that only novels can give us an idea of the nature of the incompossible.

In 'Monadology' (1714), Leibniz defines his concept of the individual as a thinking thing, the monad. Each monad is a simple substance, that is, a substance made of one part, such as a life, a soul, or a mind. As such they are distinguished from compound substances or bodies. All subdivisions of matter are composed of an infinity of parts and each of these parts (which are also always compounds) has an indivisible monad that corresponds to it. There is a hierarchy, however, as the monads of inanimate bodies are not considered souls: these are only possessed by animals, and of the animals only humans have rational souls or minds. On the one hand, then, you have matter composed solely of substances that are always compounds (which always include an infinite number of other compounds within them), yet on the other hand each of these distinct compounds is also represented on a spiritual plane by simple, indivisible substances called monads.

Each monad reflects the primary monad: the originary simple substance that is God. Only God does not correspond to a compound substance, only God is mind independent of matter. As each monad reflects the infinite monad that is God, the whole of the infinite universe is reflected or perceived within each of the monads. It is something like a hologram that is reputed to contain the whole image within each fragment. Yet each monad is distinct and distinguishes itself through its perceptions. While each perceives everything, each (with the exception of God) perceives most things confusedly. Its power and its nature are defined by what it perceives clearly.

Monads are distinguished by perception, which is understood as an internal process, but it is a peculiar kind of internal process as it is completely oriented towards the external. The monad, therefore, somehow seems to come between the dichotomy internal/external, interpreting what is other so that it can distinguish what is the same or the self; and this process is unceasing, as the monad (that which is unchangeable in its parts) changes in accordance with what it perceives. Its perceptions in turn are equated with its affections. To quote Leibniz from 'Principles of Nature and of Grace':

> [O]ne monad, in itself and at a particular moment, can only be distinguished from another by internal qualities and activities, which can be nothing else but its *perceptions* (that is to say, the representations in the simple of the compound or of that which is outside) and its

appetitions (that is to say, its tendencies to pass from one perception to another), which are the principles of change.[8]

The incompossible

In Leibniz, the term 'incompossible' refers to an understanding of possibilities that are mutually exclusive. I cannot be in two places at the same time, for example. The incompossible involves the understanding that while all things that are possible are conceived by God, only certain possibilities are realized in this world, which is the best of all possible worlds. The rule of incompossiblity affirms that 'possible worlds cannot pass into existence if they are incompossible with what God chooses' (*TF*, p.63). The fable of Sextus outlined in *Theodicy*, which Deleuze calls 'a source for all modern literature', describes a pyramid of possible worlds in which the advent of different possibilities bring into being different worlds. As all things are linked through causation, any change to a given possibility would give rise to a different world. God, then, chooses the best from among the possible worlds, and this is the world that is *realized*. The other possible worlds have a *virtual* existence, in that, while they are possible, they have not been brought into being: that is, they are *actualized* (their essence has been understood in a different possible world by God), but have not been realized. This virtual existence of the not realized possible, as will be further considered below, exists only in thought, only in relation to monads, as bodies exist only as possibilities that have been realized. This is important to an understanding of literature, as it too has the capacity to produce existences that are virtual, which have only a spiritual or mental being.

The image of thought relates to the power of thinking, which is a productive power, the power to generate effects, that is, to make things happen, to realize the possible (which means that actualized virtuals might bring into being realized possibilities). Deleuze affirms just this in relation to his reading of Proust: that while literature works through the attribute of Thought, it nevertheless produces complex effects both in bodies and minds. Proust understands his work as a magnifying glass that is turned by readers upon their own souls so that they might read and interpret its workings (*PS*, p.145). Deleuze affirms that the work of art is a machine, because it produces truths: 'No one has insisted more than Proust on the following point: that the truth is produced, that it is produced by orders of machines that function within us, that it is extracted from our impressions, hewn out of our life, delivered in a work' (*PS*, pp.146–7). No doubt these are different orders of production: the production of a God who produces all things, on the one hand, and

the production made available to a mode or monad who only sees some things clearly and must struggle adequately to express or achieve the range of potentials coiled within its own essence.

Escaping from determinism

It is worth turning again to Leibniz's concept of the incompossible so as to consider the different orders of causation touched upon here (that of God and that of God's creatures). In Leibniz, God is capable of all possible things yet instead of realizing all possible things he chooses the best of all possible worlds from among all the possible worlds, and this is the world we inhabit. There is a connection between thought and causation, then, at a fundamental level. The world is predetermined, but only understood as such from the viewpoint of God. How, then, can such a world accommodate beings such as ourselves who can never adequately understand the power of the infinite causal chain?

In Leibniz's system the problem of how one might explain human freedom within a deterministic world is a key concern; indeed, the subtitle of *Theodicy* is 'Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil'. Still, many critics, such as Austin Farrer in his Introduction to the English edition of *Theodicy*, have found Leibniz's response (that human freedom can coexist with absolute determinism) not completely convincing. Through the doctrine of pre-established harmony, each monad (and the fate contained within the essence of each monad) fits into place beside all the other monads with their complementary fates, like the pieces of an elaborate jigsaw puzzle. All things are pre-determined, and the fates of all are pre-determined (in an almost Calvinist sense), yet while those who are damned are damned from the beginning of time, they are damned in accordance with their own nature or essence, which leads them 'freely' to commit evil.[9]

From the point of view of a Deleuzian reading, the problematic involvement of a transcendent God, outside his creation (unlike the immanent Spinozian God which expresses creation), does, despite Leibniz's protestations to the contrary, seem to place tight constraints on human freedom. Deleuze reads Leibniz against the grain of this and in a certain sense overturns Leibniz in re-reading him, so that new freedoms open up through the concept of the virtual. That is, while we cannot *realize* the possible in the manner of God, we can *imagine* the possible. Leibniz states:

> The Stoics already derived from the decrees of God the prevision of events. [...] And according to my system, God, having seen the

> possible world that he desired to create, foresaw everything therein. Thus one may say that the divine knowledge of vision differs from the knowledge of simple intelligence only in that it adds to the latter the acquaintance with the actual decree to choose this sequence of things which simple intelligence had already presented, but only as possible; and this decree now makes the present universe. (*TH*, pp.342–3).

The not yet realized possible, the virtual which we actualize in imagining it *as* possible does have an existence in thought, and Deleuze uses this to open the door to creation through art, as the possible worlds developed in literature (which can even include incompossible events) are understood as being productive: that is, of having effects.

We can express a power of the virtual through understanding, through thought, and this is true of philosophy as much as literature, though in different ways. In the 'Prospects and Concepts' section of *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari describe the methods of science and compare them with the methods of philosophy. Science descends from the virtual to the actual by focusing upon the real event as it unfolds (the event of a chemical reaction, for example). Philosophy, on the other hand, moves in the opposite direction, from the real event back towards the virtual. It is thereby able to express an event conceptually: the event as a potentiality, a possibility. In doing this, philosophy opens up or creates possibilities. The concept as a virtual event allows for the actualization of the understanding of the possibility of such events.[10]

Deleuze's interest in the fable recounted in *Theodicy*, where the Goddess Pallas leads Theodorus through rooms that describe possible alternative fates for Sextus, rooms that form a pyramid, with the best world at the top and an infinity of possible worlds beneath, can be further linked to his interest in 'viewpoint'. The 'possible world' is a concept Deleuze develops elsewhere to describe the Other, as being neither an object nor a subject, but rather 'the reality of the possible as something possible' (see *N*, p.147). In his reading of Leibniz, Deleuze underlines how 'God chooses one world among an infinity of possible worlds: [but] the other worlds also have their actuality in monads that are conveying them, Adam who does not sin, or Sextus who does not rape Lucretia' (*TF*, p.104). 'Viewpoint' is a key concept in *Proust and Signs*, and can be linked to the idea of 'self-survey' which Deleuze develops in *The Fold* and further develops with Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* from their reading of Raymond Ruyer, who in turn develops it from his reading of Leibniz's monad (*TF*, pp.102–3).

Viewpoint

If literature is drawn into relation with the fable from *Theodicy*, it is clearly because of the idea of possible worlds, but also because of the relation of this concept to the viewpoint: each monad expresses a viewpoint, but the possible worlds bring forth an infinity of possible viewpoints related to the same individual. For Deleuze, each possible world contains another monad: the Adam who does not sin is distinct from the Adam who does, and so on.

For Deleuze, the power of literature in part stems from its capacity to draw together, or accommodate simultaneously, different viewpoints. Literature can accommodate incompossibles, of course, and this point is made forcefully in the *The Time-Image*, and in *The Fold*. However, as well as accommodating mutually exclusive events, it can express, better than the modes of thought available to science or philosophy, how the same individual might inhabit differing viewpoints.

> Each subject expresses the world from a certain viewpoint. But the viewpoint is the difference itself, the absolute internal difference. Each subject therefore expresses an absolutely different world. [. . .] But the world expressed is not identified with the subject; it is distinguished from the subject precisely as essence is distinguished from existence, even from the subject's own existence. (*PS*, pp.42–3)

The ability to mix viewpoints, to shift viewpoints, is a key capacity available to literature. There are divergences from Leibniz in Proust, as Proust establishes fragments that resemble the monads but differ in that whereas the monads are unified by God and the pre-established harmony instituted by God, there is no such unifying agent in Proust: rather, there are fragments not readily drawn into a whole, fragments which are only linked 'transversally' and create 'food for thought' in the provocation this leads to; the provocation to create a link (*PS*, p.111). Instead of the perfectly corresponding pieces of Leibniz's pre-established harmony, the work of art brings with it:

> fragments that can no longer be restored, pieces that do not fit into the same puzzle [. . .]. The language of signs begins to speak for itself, [. . .] it is no longer supported on a subsisting Logos: only the formal structure of the work of art will be capable of deciphering the fragmentary raw material it utilizes, without external reference, without an allegorical or analogical 'grid'. (*PS*, p.113)

These fragments are like the monads in that they can correspond to viewpoints, but the viewpoint is not identified with an individual (*PS*, p.110); rather, the same individual might be inhabited by various viewpoints, with the fragments expressing the distance between one viewpoint and another within the individual.

Returning to Proust from Deleuze's reading, we see this clearly: there are a series of gaps, which force us to think. We see Swann in love, his obsession with Odette, and the story of their affair, Swann's jealousy, and Odette's increasingly brazen infidelity, which seems to lead in a certain direction. Yet a gap ensues, and the next time we encounter Swann we find him married to Odette who has been transformed from courtesan to a lady of fashion and the mother of Gilberte. These are things that somehow do not follow, involving some absent process through which everything has changed: Swann is no longer the Swann we knew, Odette is no longer Odette. They do not follow, but they contain a truth, nevertheless, one which allows us to see the process of time, and how this movement, this flux of time, opens up possible worlds, new viewpoints, which then inhabit individuals, supplanting or existing simultaneously with other viewpoints within those individuals, because the viewpoint 'is not individual, but on the contrary a principle of individuation' (*PS*, p.110). Following Leibniz, the shift in viewpoint would be the function of a change in perspective within the monad, but in the fragmented form, we are not given, and struggle (in thought) and fail to recover, that which accounts for these shifts.

Deleuze speaks of two kinds of links in Proust: on the one hand there is 'resonance' which brings together the disparate in time around an image (where time is regained, with the episode of the *madeleine* providing a clear example). On the other hand there is 'amplitude', which establishes or underlines the reality of distance around an image. This is indicative of a kind of death, of the recognition that the individual is no longer the same individual; it involves a time lost which is experienced with the death of the grandmother, or Marcel's sense of the manner in which a given self can die, the self that loved Albertine, for example (*PS*, p.159).

If there is a clear link between 'thought' and the power of causation in Leibniz and Spinoza, a power linked to the making whole which occurs through a logos, a making whole which brings together all the pieces of a single puzzle, then there is a different power of causation in literature, a power of creation caused by ruptures or discontinuities in the causal chain. Memory is privileged because the experience of being through time that is felt and can be expressed in literature, offers a door

through to other possible worlds, to other viewpoints within the same individual:

> It is no longer a matter of saying: to create is to remember – but rather, to remember is to create, is *to reach that point where the associative chain breaks, leaps over the constituted individual, is transferred to the birth of an individuating world*. And it is no longer a matter of saying: to create is to think – but rather, to think is to create and primarily to create the act of thinking within thought. To think, then, is to provide food for thought. (*PS*, p.111)

In his introduction to *Theodicy*, Austin Farrer enters momentarily into a dialogue form in which he has Leibniz state:

> According to the truth of things, each monad is simply its own mental life, its own world-view, its own thoughts and desires. To know things as they are would be simultaneously to live over, as though from within and by a miracle of sympathy, the biographies of an infinite number of distinct monads. This is absolutely impossible. (*TH*, intro., pp.24–5)

While adequately representing such an absolute reality as beyond any form of human thought, Farrer's comments draw our attention to how a literary image of thought, which draws its power in part from the grinding together of incommensurable parts (see *PS*, p.123), the overlapping of pieces seemingly drawn together from different puzzles, might provoke us into thought. It is able to present us with fragments of viewpoints that allow us to apprehend the multiplicity and movement involved in a life: that is, it creates the possibility of that apprehension. In the first part of *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze makes use of the Neoplatonic concept of 'complication' to account for this. This term involves an understanding of the original state of things, a chaos from which things emerge which 'envelops the many in the One and affirms the unity of the multiple' (*PS*, p.45). He continues with regard to the character of Charlus in Proust's novel:

> The least we can say is that Charlus is complicated. But the word must be taken in its full etymological sense. Charlus's genius is to retain all the souls that compose him in the 'complicated' state: this is how it happens that Charlus always has the freshness of the world just created and unceasingly emits primordial signs that the interpreter must decipher, that is, explicate. (*PS*, p.45)

Firstly, then, thinking in art involves the creation of complicated worlds, worlds that provoke us to interpretation. Secondly, we are asked to bring this interpretation into relation with our own world view, to use it in order to produce effects within our own lives, that is, to translate the complicated worlds of others from the possible worlds of fiction into our own 'clear zone' (to use a term Leibniz relates to the monad), where our perceptions create possibilities for our own being.

Samuel Beckett

Naoya Mori has recently underlined the links between Beckett and Leibniz. In this essay,[11] Mori explains how the kinds of combinatorial logic which underlie passages such as the sucking stones in *Molloy*, and the various permutations of possible arrangements in *Watt*, can be directly connected with Leibniz's notion of pre-established harmony which underwrites and explains the play of possible worlds in the *Theodicy*. Mori quotes a passage from *Watt* describing the permutations of Watt's servants which ends as follows:

> And in this long chain of consistence, a chain stretching from the long dead to the far unborn, the notion of the arbitrary could only survive as the notion of a pre-established arbitrary.[12]

One can see, here, how Beckett devises a somewhat different response from that of Proust to the problems of possibility and viewpoint which Deleuze has shown to be clearly linked with ideas developed by Leibniz. Deleuze also recognizes this difference in Beckett, and uses it as a basis for his concept of 'exhaustion' which he develops in his essay on Beckett's plays for television.[13] Rather than shifting between fragmentary viewpoints, at times at least Beckett plays with this idea of exhaustion, an idea that would allow an acknowledgement of, if not a full representation of, all possible viewpoints. Yet while this is clearly one strategy which Beckett uses, it is only a partial response, as it is clear that Beckett also adopts another approach which might be thought to differ in degree rather than kind, from that described above in relation to Proust.

In discussing *Film*, Samuel Beckett's work for cinema, Gilles Deleuze contends that Beckett allows us to recognize key potentials of the filmic medium because he exhausts or negates those elements.[14] The same principle of exhaustion or negation might be seen in Beckett's aesthetic writings, where he develops the concept of 'nonrelation' in art, which he opposes to an artistic tradition which, he states, has always emphasized relation and the power of relation.

In his first novel, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932), Beckett describes an aesthetic theory that emphasizes the connections or relations between things rather than the nature of those things themselves. In a later letter to Georges Duthuit (written in 1949) Beckett outlines a somewhat different aesthetic understanding, one that emphasizes *non*relation or the refusal to fully draw connections or relationships. Beckett states:

> As far as I'm concerned, Bram [van Velde]'s painting [. . .] is new because it is the first to repudiate relation in all its forms. It is not the relation with this or that order of encounter that he refuses, but the state of being quite simply in relation full stop, the state of being in front of. [. . .] [T]he break with the outside world implies the break with the inside [. . .]. I'm not saying that he doesn't search to re-establish correspondence. What is important is that he does not manage to.[15]

In 'Peintres de l'Empêchement' (first published in 1948) Beckett states that all works of art have involved the readjustment of the relation between subject and object,[16] a relation that he claims has now broken down. He announced this crisis over a decade before and prior to World War Two in 1934 in another review, 'Recent Irish Poetry'.[17] Elsewhere, I have argued in detail how Beckett moves from making clear links in his works, through allusion and other means, to occluding the element which would link the terms, while still offering terms which cry out to be related.[18] Such a process of occlusion, or an insistence on gaps, however, differs in degree rather than kind from other modes of artistic thinking.

That is, the insistence on gaps between relatable terms has a long history in art. Stephen Greenblatt, for example, claims that something happens to Shakespeare's artistic method around the time he writes *Hamlet*:

> Shakespeare found that he could immeasurably deepen the effect of his plays, that he could provoke in the audience [. . .] a peculiarly passionate intensity of response, if he took out a key explanatory element, thereby occluding the rationale, motivation, or ethical principle that accounted for the action that was to unfold. The principle was not the making of a riddle to be solved, but the creation of a strategic opacity. This opacity [. . .] released an enormous energy that had been at least partially blocked or contained by familiar, reassuring explanations.[19]

One kind of artistic practice, developed to a high degree by Beckett, is to leave gaps between and within the subjects who perceive and the objects which are presented.

It might be argued, then, that there is also only a difference of degree between Beckett and Proust on this point, that while the breaks between viewpoints that we recognize in Beckett are still more stark than those we witness in Proust, there are nevertheless strong structural similiarities between Proust's shifts in viewpoint and certain shifts apparent in some of Beckett's works. An obvious example of such a shift occurs in *Waiting for Godot* where the characters of Pozzo and Lucky who appear in Act 2 have changed considerably from those who appeared in Act 1. A second example would be the shifts that occur between the various Krapps which are apparent at different time periods in *Krapp's Last Tape*. While in both of these cases there is sufficient objective evidence to allow us to see that Krapp and Pozzo and Lucky are the 'same' characters as before, a fairly radical failure of self-similarity is still very much apparent here. The relation between the viewpoints becomes complicated, or might even be understood to offer kinds of permutations of self, with different possible selves emerging at different moments. Yet the links to Leibnizan notions of the possible remain clear in both Beckett and Proust.

The essence

How might this be connected back to where we began, with a consideration of 'the image of thought'? Clearly Deleuze sees in literature one manner of overturning the dogmatic image of thought. Further, one might claim that we can begin to see elements of why this overturning might be necessary.

In 'Of an Organum or Ars Magna of Thinking' (1679),[20] Leibniz describes how one might build an *organum* or instrument of thought. Such an instrument would allow us to understand things adequately. This instrument would be something that could be conceived through itself. That is, Leibniz contends that the cause of something (say 'heat') would be the definition of that thing: if we can grasp the cause we can get to the thing.

In *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze describes literature as a thinking without an instrument, without an organum (*PS*, p.146). He also sees Proust's challenge as involving a challenge to the logos. This, in effect, is a challenge to the idea of tracing a complete line of causation. The dogmatic image of thought leads us to the adequate idea by attempting to reconstruct such completeness: the instrument of thought is the completely understood cause itself which is applied in order to completely understand a thing in itself. Art, on the other hand, works through gaps in

knowledge, fragments comprising viewpoints connected by transversal lines: the sign itself is a fragment, a provocation that forces us or urges us to think, to trace connections that exist but an understanding of whose functioning is elusive (*PS*, p.129). Thinking in literature, Deleuze claims, always comes 'after'. That is, you do not have adequate knowledge of a line of causation. There are events and gaps between them. There are signs that require interpretation. The links have to be forged, or gaps have to be leapt across, and this is done through thought.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, tr. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p.149. Hereafter referred to as *N*.
2. See Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp.103–10.
3. Plato, *The Collected Dialogues, including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.755.
4. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, tr. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp.142–3.
5. See Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, tr. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp.94–101. Hereafter referred to as *PS*.
6. See Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, tr. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp.61–3. Hereafter referred to as *TF*.
7. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p.303. Hereafter referred to as *CII*.
8. G.W. Leibniz, 'Principles of Nature and of Grace. 1714', tr. Mary Morris and G.H.R. Parkinson, in *Philosophical Writings*, ed. G.H.R. Parkinson (London: J.M. Dent, 1992), p.195.
9. See G.W. Leibniz, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God and the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, tr. E.M. Huggard, ed. Austin Farrer (Chicago: Open Court, 1990), pp.365–8. Hereafter referred to as *TH*.
10. See Gilles Deleuze, *What is Philosophy?*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp.155–9.
11. Naoya Mori, 'Becoming Stone: A Leibnizian Reading of Beckett's Fiction', in *Borderless Beckett, Beckett Sans Frontières*, *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, No.19 (2008), pp.201–10.
12. Samuel Beckett, *Watt* (London: John Calder, 1978), p.132.
13. Gilles Deleuze, 'The Exhausted', tr. Anthony Uhlmann, in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, [all other essays] tr. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp.152–74.
14. See Gilles Deleuze, 'The Greatest Irish Film', in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, tr. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp.23–6.

15. Samuel Beckett, 'Letter to Georges Duthuit, 9–10 March 1949', tr. Walter Redfern, in *Beckett After Beckett*, ed. Anthony Uhlmann and S.E. Gontarski (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), pp.15–21.
16. Samuel Beckett, 'Peintres de l'empêchement', in *Disjecta*, ed. Ruby Cohn (London: John Calder, 1983), pp.133–7 [p.137].
17. Samuel Beckett, 'Recent Irish Poetry', in *Disjecta*, ed. Ruby Cohn (London: John Calder, 1983), pp.70–6.
18. See Anthony Uhlmann, *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.36–64.
19. Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), pp.323–4.
20. G.W. Leibniz, 'Of an Organum or Ars Magna of Thinking', tr. Mary Morris and G.H.R. Parkinson, in *Philosophical Writings*, ed. G.H.R. Parkinson (London: J.M. Dent, 1992).

Part II
Visual, Cinematic and Sonic Encounters

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7

Apprenticeship, Philosophy, and the 'Secret Pressures of the Work of Art' in Deleuze, Beckett, Proust and Ruiz; or Remaking the *Recherche*

Garin Dowd

> Tous les problèmes que pose Proust sont, à mon avis, cinématographiques.[1] [All the problems posed by Proust are, to my mind, cinematographic.]
>
> Tous les signes convergent vers l'art; tous les apprentissages, par les voies les plus diverses, sont déjà des apprentissages inconscients de l'art lui-même.[2] [All the signs converge towards art; all the apprenticeships, by the most diverse routes, are already unconscious apprenticeships in art itself.]
>
> La philosophie, avec toute sa méthode et sa bonne volonté, n'est rien face aux pressions secrètes de l'oeuvre d'art. (*PS*, p.119) [Philosophy, with all its method and its good will, is nothing in the face of the secret pressures of the work of art.]
>
> I have written my book in a cheap flashy philosophical jargon.[3]

When, in the course of his 1931 study of Marcel Proust, Beckett pauses to quote Calderón's famous indictment of nativity,[4] he is merely taking one more step in what Nicholas Zurbrugg identifies as a specifically Beckettian, rather than Proustian *pensum*.[5] The lines prepare the ground for the bitter fruit of his conclusion. Through the music of Vinteuil is disclosed, according to Beckett, 'the "invisible reality" that damns the life of the body on earth as a pensum and reveals the meaning of the word: "defunctus"' (*P*, p.93).

If Beckett's study has belatedly received the criticisms its author no doubt anticipated, another influential study published a little over 30

years later has, like its predecessor, elicited, among others, the critical response that the author of the *Recherche* finds himself recruited to the self-serving project of the critic. Gilles Deleuze's Proust is cast not as the pessimistic Schopenhauerian which Beckett makes of him, but rather, as a force of affirmation in the vaguely Nietzschean register of the 'powers of the false'.[6] Deleuze would studiously augment his 1964 study with two additions in an effort to improve it. The consequence of this is to render its textual genesis a testament to one of the themes, and for Deleuze *the* theme of the *Recherche*, namely, apprenticeship. Moreover, the 'pedagogy' to which Proust's novel subjects the philosopher becomes itself an example of the 'untimely' operations of art upon what Deleuze calls the upright or dogmatic image of thought.[7]

The third individual to perform acts of condensation and transposition on the *Recherche* (we will refer to Proust himself in this regard later) is the Chilean film director Raúl Ruiz. While his 1999 film *Le Temps retrouvé* was in development Ruiz claimed to have done piecemeal preparatory work for his attempt to film Proust in his substantial body of work (which at the time of the film's release already stood at no fewer than 50 films). In the world of cinema, to which both Beckett and Deleuze found themselves drawn in different ways, and in ways which would ultimately lead to several notable virtual alliances and affiliations (one writes *to*, another *on* Eisenstein; one makes *Film*, the other writes on it; one writes the preface to the other's volume of television plays), Ruiz forms part of an especially interesting lineage, including, famously, Visconti and Losey-Pinter, who sought to adapt Proust for the screen. That among the members of the illustrious lineage we find an author (Pinter as author of the screenplay) himself close to Beckett is itself worthy of note; however, it is the abandoned nature of the projects of Visconti and Losey-Pinter that defines their posterity.[8] The history of 'Proust à l'écran'[9] demonstrates the recalcitrance of this radically 'indicial' *chef-d'oeuvre* to the particular form of apprenticeship at work when the pretender attempts to learn by *re*-presentation.[10]

The impact of an engagement with the *Recherche* is for all three *suivants*, Gilles Deleuze, Samuel Beckett and Raúl Ruiz, a formative one. However, my concern here is with something other than the question of this type of apprenticeship in posterity. Rather, it is my intention to show in which ways what is at stake is an apprenticeship in signs, following Deleuze's terminology, already figured (and in this proleptically beyond its own covers) in Proust's text. The *Recherche*, viewed in this context, becomes a pedagogy of the *untimely*. If, for Deleuze, every work of art is in some sense inaugural, it is so within a temporality specific to art. The time

disclosed in art differs in nature from time as we otherwise experience or measure it.[11] In the respective cases of Beckett, Deleuze and Ruiz, Proust's own work of art, which, as Blanchot argues, comes about due to a 'quadruple métamorphose qui n'est que le mouvement du livre vers l'oeuvre' [quadruple metamorphosis which is nothing other than the movement of the book toward the work], functions as an unprepared-for object, an uncanny representation of either their own work or their own profession.[12]

Deleuze's 1964 study of Proust opens by insisting that, rather than being primarily concerned with memory or the past, the *Recherche* is essentially a novel of apprenticeship.[13] Noting how the protagonist proceeds by error and self-correction in line with the Platonic notion of learning by recollection, Deleuze nonetheless insists that, at a more profound level, the novel concerns an apprenticeship which surpasses this model of learning both in its goals and in its principles: the novel is directed towards the future, not the past.

Apprenticeship

The role of apprenticeship in philosophy itself is set out most famously in Plato's theory of the education of the philosopher in ideas in the *Meno;*[14] as a model it finds itself sustained by a structural support framework in the very modality of the Platonic dialogues themselves (or at least those which manifest a strictly Socratic method). Socrates in the *agora* is the authority, and the interlocutors, the apprentices, are all friends in wisdom (philo-sophia). For Debra Nails, if the *Meno* (along with the *Gorgias*) explores the disadvantages of having acquired one's beliefs from an authority, then the accomplishment of Socrates is that 'he teaches *in situ* a method to guide the search'.[15] It is in part the echo in the work of Proust of the Platonic heritage that leads Deleuze to his intriguing and often paradoxical linkage of Platonic and Proustian perspectives on apprenticeship in his 1964 study (subject to two augmentations) of the author. The *Recherche* is indeed the anti-*Meno*. The dialogue begins with Meno asking if virtue can be taught. Socrates undertakes his response by way of a demonstration of how an uneducated slave can be revealed to possess in some sense the knowledge of geometry. The purpose of the demonstration is to show that the slave can arrive at accurate opinions because he recollects them, rather than has them imposed upon him by teaching. This is a pedagogical model of recognition flouted by the narrator of the *Recherche* who apprentices himself to signs in their difference and contingency [*hasard*], and in their violence.[16] For Deleuze, the signs

of sensation, the third category of four types of signs, is exceeded by the art for which it serves as a preparation:

> According to Proust, even involuntary memory occupies a very restricted zone, which art exceeds on all sides, and which has only a conductive role. The problem of art, the correlative problem to creation, is that of perception and not memory: music is pure presence, and claims to enlarge perception to the limits of the universe. Such an enlarged perception is the finality of art (or of philosophy, according to Bergson). But such a goal can be attained only if perception breaks with the identity to which memory rivets it.[17]

In Plato, the Idea is always in advance, presupposed although discovered afterwards, and in this respect, for Proust, is like intelligence. Whether or not this is a literal demonstration that knowledge is recollection or an attempt to prove the immortality of the soul, the point is that there is an accommodation in advance, a neutralizing restriction on the encounter. In the same context of capture, in his essay on Boulez, Proust and Time, Deleuze develops the concept of 'occupying without counting' (*BPT*, pp.71–3). Writing of the dismissal of identity in Proust, Deleuze states that the 'fixed element' (which he likens in its functioning of enclosure to an envelope) in its Proustian formulation 'enlarges perception: it renders perceptible the variations in the striated milieu, and the distributions in the smooth milieu' (*BPT*, p.72). Proust's writing, in Deleuze's analysis, is able to disclose a plane of immanence-composition which is not preordained by a logic of recognition.[18] In this respect Proust makes a contribution to philosophy which is anti-Platonic, and disruptive of the 'upright' image of thought to which the latter subscribes. Moreover, 'to enlarge perception means to render sensible, sonorous (or visible), those forces that are ordinarily imperceptible. No doubt these forces are not necessarily time, but they are intertwined and united with those of time' (*BPT*, p.72). Time in a pure state is not time as unities and relations of chronometry as such; this is time as force.

Beckett

When it comes to abstraction, philosophy, in the eyes of Beckett, has a monopoly. His interest in the voices and manners of public performance of Deleuze and Derrida, expressed in a conversation with André Bernold, is exemplary of the artist's perspective he brought to bear on philosophical problems throughout his oeuvre.[19] In the 1930s, the annotations

he made while reading the great philosophers betray this position. The 'note-snatcher' Beckett appears to be interested in the images rather than the concepts per se. Beckett can, then, be said to share with Deleuze the belief that philosophy cannot hope to compete with the 'secret pressures of the work of art'. That at least is one ideological underpinning for the apprenticeship the young Beckett served in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin and elsewhere – one that delivers, in one notable notebook entry, a marvellous diagram representing the *Enneads* of Plotinus rather than a blow-by-blow account of the ascent of the soul from its fallen state towards the One. Beckett, however, is not as sanguine as Deleuze about the work of art. Of Proust Beckett would find the 'molecular' pressure (an image evoked in his essay on the van Velde brothers[20]) of the *Recherche* only accidentally maintained in the course of a project the aim of which was architectonic closure. 'If Proust had lived', he commented, 'he would have so altered the original writing as to remove all discord and dissension, a beautiful unity of tone and treatment would have, as it were, embalmed the whole':[21] this is Beckett's judgement on the intended but failed Proustian synthesis.

Faciality, individuation and form

One of the signifying regimes foregrounded by Proust and picked up on by both Deleuze and Beckett is faces as morphological register, both of time's passage, as in the 'Bal de têtes' section of the *Le Temps retrouvé*, and (especially those of the beloved) as metamorphic and anamorphic registers of multiplicity.

> Les lignes ne résistaient pas à cet agrandissement. Celle du nez se brisait de près, s'arrondissait, envahie par les mêmes cercles huileux que le reste de la figure; et de près les yeux rentraient sous des poches qui détruisaient la ressemblance du visage actuel avec celle du visage d'autrefois qu'on avait cru retrouver.[22]
>
> [Nor could the lines of the face stand up to this magnification. That of the nose was seen now to be broken and rounded, its regularity marred by the same oily patches as the rest of the face; and the eyes at short range retreated behind pockets of flesh which destroyed the resemblance of the person before me to the one whom I had known in the past and thought that I had met again.][23]

The narrator concludes that the age of the invitees increases along with the enlargement of the face upon his approach and with the possibility

of observing the face from different angles. Age for him 'était amenée par le progrès moins des années que, dans la vision de l'observateur, du degré de l'échelle de grossissement' (*LTR*, p.344) ['was made apparent not so much by the advance of the years as by a greater degree of accuracy in the scale of the observer's vision' (*SLT*, p.319)]. For Beckett in his account of Proustian individuation (anticipating Deleuze), Albertine is the coalescence formed out of the little band at Balbec: 'She has no individuality. She is merely one blossom in this fragile hedge of Pennsylvanian roses breaking the line of the waves' (*P*, p.46). From this premise, with the understanding that, once 'captive', Albertine has been detached from this band, Beckett goes on to enumerate the processes whereby Albertine is subjected to a series of subtractions from the 'first Albertine' of the little band. The first Albertine as he describes her is reduced and displaced to a second characterized by a set of attributes and thence to a third mutation of those attributes. Beckett lists four attributes of the second Albertine which find themselves subjected to a downgrading at the third remove. What is especially interesting from the point of view of a Deleuzian context here is that, of the four, two attributes pertain to Albertine's face. The first is 'the effect of a declamatory beauty-spot on her chin' (*P*, p.46), the second 'the provisonal inflammation of her temple constituting an optical centre of gravity about which the composition of her features is organised' (*P*, pp.46–7).

Beckett stresses that this multiplicity of strata in Albertine puts the 'subject' into parentheses. Indeed, a consequence is the abeyance of the subject as a category. In the terms later developed by Deleuze, Albertine is an *individuation*, not an identity. The migration, as Beckett puts it, of her beauty-spot from chin to lip is not only a movement across a superficies or facade which would contain the manifold or the multiplicity under a determinant form; it is, rather, indicative of a turmoil and mutation 'in depth', of a 'turmoil of objective and immanent contradictions over which the subject has no control' (*P*, p.47).

The emphasis on the face is even more apparent in Beckett's transition in the course of his argument:

> Yet already he concludes, before the kaleidoscope of her expressions, before this face that from being all surface, smooth and waxed, passes to an almost fluid state of translucid gaiety, and from the chiselled polish of an opal to the feverish black-red congestion of a cyclamen, that the Name is an example of a barbarous society's primitivism, and as conventionally inadequate as 'Homer' or 'sea'. (*P*, pp.47–8)

Beckett here is alert to aspects of Proustian individuation which Deleuze would later schematize in terms of the 'white wall, black hole' model of identification.

But even this new Albertine is multiple, and just as the most modern applications of photography can frame a single church succcessively in the arcades of all the others and the entire horizon in the arch of a bridge or between two adjacent leaves, thus decomposing the illusion of a solid object into its manifold component aspects, so the short journey of his lips to the cheek of Albertine creates ten Albertines, and transforms a human banality into a many-headed goddess (*P*, p.49).

For Deleuze, too, the movement towards the cheeks of Albertine is a compelling example, and provides an instance of transversality in operation. Transversality is defined by Ronald Bogue, in his commentary on Deleuze, quite succinctly, as being 'a passage without interval that affirms a difference'.[24] Faces have two sides or *côtés* which, like the Méséglise and the Guermantes ways, are incommensurable and held in tension.

However, the example of the approach to the cheek of Albertine is for Deleuze, as for Beckett, articulated in terms of planes and of a proliferation of objects, such that it is molecularized or compartmentalized and fragmented. There is a jump from plane to plane (anticipating the machinic connect and cut of the *Anti-Oedipus*).

> Et dans chaque vase, un moi qui vit, qui perçoit, qui désire et se souvient, qui veille ou qui dort, qui meurt, se suicide et revit par à-coups: 'émiettement', 'fractionnement' d'Albertine auquel répond une multiplication du moi. (*PS*, pp.150–1)
>
> [And in each vase, a self who lives, who perceives, who desires and remembers, who stays awake or who sleeps, who dies, commits suicide and jolts back to life: the 'dissipation', 'splitting up' of Albertine to which a multiplication of the self responds.]

> Comme entre le côté de Méséglise et le côté de Guermantes, toute l'oeuvre consiste à établir des *transversales*, qui nous font sauter d'un profil à l'autre d'Albertine, d'une Albertine à une autre, d'un monde à un autre, d'un mot à un autre, sans jamais ramener le multiple à l'Un, [. . .] affirmant sans les réunir *tous* ces fragments irréductibles au Tout. (*PS*, pp.152–3)
>
> [As between the Méséglise Way and the Guermantes Way, the entire work consists of establishing *transversals*, which make us jump from one profile of Albertine to another, from one Albertine to another, from one world to another, from one word to another, without ever

> bringing the multiple back to the One, [. . .] affirming without uniting *all* of these fragments which are irreducible to the All.]

In some ways, both the Beckett and the Deleuze under consideration here are amateur literary critics.[25] Beckett is a scholar toying with a career in academe. He has written and published a long poem, 'Whoroscope', and a book of short stories; his *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* is unpublished; *Murphy* not yet begun; his essay on Joyce has appeared. Deleuze, for his part, a little over three decades later, is breaking off from three volumes in his history of philosophy phase which has seen him undertake and acquit himself in his own apprenticeship, prior to his 1968 *Doctorat d'état*, with volumes on Hume and others. Deleuze has already undertaken his study of the master – Nietzsche – followed by the enemy – Kant. Beckett's 'master' is Joyce, dealt with in 'Dante . . . Bruno.Vico . . . Joyce'.[26] Is Proust the enemy? Not quite, though many commentators have shown ways in which his work has produced no small number of anti-Prousts.[27] Indeed, Proust is to some degree an enemy in Deleuze's sense, appropriated, perhaps with less rigour and rather less care, than the Kant subjected to idiosyncratic philosophical portraiture in Deleuze's 1963 study.

From sick-bed to paving stone

In considering the question of approaches to the famous life and death of Marcel Proust, as Beckett put it, it is necessary to examine and to adopt some perspectives *hors-texte*. In the memorable phrase of Vincent Kaufmann, from his *L'Equivoque épistolaire*, Proust 'est l'auteur du plus long bulletin de santé de l'histoire de la littérature française'[28] [the author of the longest health report in the history of French literature]. Appropriately, each of the followers (*suivants*) finds in Proust a 'vinculum' that binds them to the sick-bed. *Malone Dies* is Beckett's exemplary study of the figure of the supine scribe. In this connection, one should also note Deleuze's attachment to the sedentary, a condition he was often forced to experience through his own weak health. Ruiz's film, for its part, foregrounds the health report aspect of the *Recherche*, via its depiction of the sickly author as a framing device and leitmotif.

The *sine qua non* of Proustian moments tabulated by Beckett in his study forms a tableau at the heart of Ruiz's film. In the *Recherche*, the narrator recounts:

> Mais au moment où [. . .] je posai mon pied sur un pavé qui était un peu moins élevé que le précédent, tout mon découragement

> s'évanouit […]. [Les doutes] qui m'assaillaient tout à l'heure au sujet de la réalité de mes dons littéraires et même de la réalité de la littérature se trouvaient levés comme par enchantement. (*LTR*, p.256)
>
> [And at the moment when [. . .] I put my foot on a stone which was slightly lower than its neighbour, all my discouragement vanished [. . .]. [The doubts] that a few seconds ago had assailed me on the subject of the reality of my literary gifts, the reality even of literature, were removed as if by magic. (*SLT*, pp.216–17)]

The optical tricks employed by Ruiz in his screen adaptation *Le Temps retrouvé* belong to a pre-digital aesthetic. Evoking not only an earlier era of cinema, but also a 'prehistory' of cinema, the many lenses (the magnifying glass of the opening sequence, Saint-Loup's monocle, the circular window through which Marcel spies on Charlus in the brothel, etc.) throughout the film are testimony to Ruiz's intention to locate his film within the context of the history of mediated visual perception. Moreover, certain effects where bodies seem to float into and out of the frame (or in directions or at rates incommensurable with the position of the camera) were rendered possible by means of traditional film set devices such as tracks and dollies to facilitate the movement of the furniture and actors. In the *matinée* at the Guermantes' the camera moves in the opposite direction to the furniture (a similar effect is used for the trees in the foreground of the church). The combination of lenses, viewing and projection apparatuses with such physical and (originally) theatrical devices together evoke a prehistory of cinema and amount to a reprise of technological feats reminiscent of the 'théâtre du monde' of the seventeenth century. The reference to Calderón is important in the context of Ruiz as a Latin American film director steeped in a specifically Latin American baroquism. For Pedro Calderón de la Barca the world is a stage and humans are actors who play roles. The theocentric dimension of Calderón's theatre is of note too, given Ruiz's interest in theology (he enrolled at university to study law and theology, as a joke he claims). In the context of his Proust adaptation he explains that: 'Le genre "théâtre du monde" remonte au XVIIe siècle. La comédie de Calderón en fait partie. Le monde est un théâtre, et dans le monde il y a tous les éléments artificiels du théâtre' [The genre 'théâtre du monde' goes back to the seventeenth century. Calderón's plays are part of it. The world is a theatre, and in the world are all the artificial elements of theatre].[29]

To return specifically to the *pavé* scene: a close-up tracking shot shows the approach towards the uneven paving stone in Venice rather than in the courtyard of the hôtel de Guermantes. Immediately after the trip

occurs Marcel is shown in a low angle shot which sees him fixed in an improbable pose leaning forward, with trailing leg bent and held in the air. His former child self walks past and looks at him. The next shot sees Marcel holding the same pose in front of a Venetian fresco. He moves, very evidently by means of the apparatus of dolly and tracks, left to right in the frame and 'emerges' in the same pose in the courtyard; as the actor is propelled into position in the frame, the other actors hold their own positions in a *tableau vivant*; once Marcel has been transported to position, the scene is 're-animated', he returns to normal upright stance and the scene at the Guermantes matinée commences. The *Cahiers du cinéma* critic Stéphane Bouquet points out that, by dwelling on Marcel's feet in close up during the lead-up, Ruiz elicits a reaction of recognition from anyone who knows their Proust: 'Le spectateur, pas dupe, se dit: tiens, c'est le moment. Une fois qu'il a buté sur le pavé, Marcel se fige vingt secondes dans une pose improbable' [No dupe, the viewer says to him/herself: there, this is the moment. Once he has tripped on the paving stone, Marcel holds an improbable pose for twenty seconds].[30] Asked about his rendering of the *pavé* scene, Ruiz replies that it is in the book: where, of course, the *chauffeurs* note the absurd posture of Marcel (*Entretien*, p.48).

Thus, Ruiz transforms Proust into the author of an unspooling cinematic narrative from within a complex labyrinth of competing and blending *mises-en-abîme*. On his sick-bed, as depicted in the opening dictation scene of *Le Temps retrouvé* , the character of Proust blends with that of Marcel and looks at loose photographs through a magnifying glass, declaring one Cottard, another 'maman', another 'papa', one Gilberte and so on. Gilberte, however, is equally Emmanuelle Béart, the photograph suggesting an actor's portrait such as might be included in their agent's portfolio, while it being viewed through a lens reminds the viewer that Ruiz's own directorial viewfinder is also at work here. Ruiz is in this instance, as in so many others, the author of his own screenplay (in collaboration on this occasion with Gilles Taurand), and, in this opening sequence, figures Proust-Marcel as his own *alter ego*. Ruiz, of course, cannot render the most complex and abyssal inscription of a thinking of the work of art in its totality and in its abstraction by making of the hero a film-maker rather than a writer. He cannot, or at least he chose not to attempt, to have the ending of the film coincide with the completion of the apprenticeship and the commencement of the job (of making something in its very own image, namely a film). Instead Ruiz is content with more localized and concrete renditions of subject–object relations in respect of the apprenticeship and medium specific to cinema.

Images

It has been noted by commentators that Beckett had a pronounced interest in cinema and in early film theory, and this interest is exemplified by, but not limited to, the mention of Ticklepenny in the 1938 novel *Murphy* emerging into view 'as though thrown on the silent screen by Griffith in midshot soft-focus sprawling on the bed'.[31] Indeed, there is a common heritage of surrealist cinema in both Ruiz and Beckett. It has been claimed that the close-up of the eye in Beckett's *Film* is an homage to Buñuel's *Un Chien andalou*, while the image Marcel is permitted to view through Saint-Loup's device in Ruiz's film suggests a visual echo of the same film. The *Recherche* evokes cinematic elements (in the shape of projections), even if Proust may have been less than impressed by the emerging medium than was Beckett. Deleuze links the two authors in the notion of crystalline narration of which the medium of cinema can provide the most striking examples. In Ruiz, as the virtual foyer in which to host the three others, we find a reader and admirer of Deleuze (and especially of works such as *Logique du sens*[32]), a profoundly baroque film-maker whose long cherished dream of making a film version of the *Recherche* finally came to fruition in 1999. His cinema, like Deleuze's philosophy and the fiction of Proust and Beckett, also vibrates to the pressure of other disciplines and other art forms.

The moments which Proust sets out in the spare detail of the *Contre Sainte-Beuve* prefaces,[33] expands on in the *Recherche*, and which Beckett pares back down in his tabulation of the eleven Proustian 'moments' in his 1931 study, are occasions in which sensation is gathered (allegedly without, in Proust's assertion, the interference of the intellect) and mustered, or shepherded toward the finality of the work of art (with which it has a structurally analogous relation). They are instances of an apprenticeship of signs. In Ruiz's hands, as suggested by the manner in which he films the paving stone scene (recalling the precipitous nature of this scene which issues in the finale), a work of art is not a unified edifice but a multitemporal, multiplex (co-implicated), proliferating assemblage of the sort Deleuze champions in *Cinéma II: L'Image-Temps* and which he explicitly attributes to Proust (as a kind of apprentice cinematographer). Ruiz is in agreement with Deleuze when he states that all of the procedures of Proust are essentially cinematic, albeit conducted in such a way as to make the *Recherche* participate in the second rather than the first of Deleuze's two regimes of signs – that is to say, the time image rather than the movement image. In this context, the theme of apprenticeship becomes recast in the lineage of Nietzschean interpretation rather than

psychoanalytic, and the cinema falls under the rule of the powers of the falsity of art rather than the regulation of the pursuit of truth.

The centrality of a theory of the image to Proust is attested to eloquently by Maurice Blanchot in his essay: 'Il n'y a plus d'intériorité, car tout ce qui est intérieur s'y déploie au-dehors, y prend la forme d'une image' (*LV*, p.23) [There is no more interiority, for everything interior unfolds outside, taking there the form of an image]. The work of apprenticeship is one of accumulation, of repetition, of working by habit, with its dull inviolability, in Beckett's terms (*P*, pp.18–19); however, an apprenticeship undertaken by an artist to philosophy, or by a philosopher to art, operates according to a quite distinct rhythm. It is Proust who for Deleuze offers an image of the encounter with sensation which assists him in developing his challenge to the upright image of thought of the philosophical tradition. The encounter of the apprentice in signs (Proust-Marcel) with the world of art offers a 'little picture' to the apprentice in its signs – Deleuze – which will assist in transforming a duty (pensum) in the history of philosophy to a project which would later be described as schizoanalytic, registering the becomings between and across strata and layers (linked transversally), rather than devoted to a tracing of lineage and pedigree.

Thus Ruiz, Proust, Deleuze, Beckett are all yoked together in the inclusive disjunctions of a multifaceted, multidirectional apprenticeship. This is a mode of apprenticeship which entails succumbing to the play along the borders of the trade, profession or vocation in question when it registers the secret pressures of the work of art. Bearing in mind that Proust can be said to be already involved in an act of *remaking* material already written in the *Contre Sainte-Beuve* prefaces, Stéphane Bouquet is speaking for all four of our apprentices when he comments, 'Refaire la *Recherche*, ce n'est pas se prendre au sérieux, c'est prendre le jeu au sérieux' (p.45) [Remaking the *Recherche* is not taking oneself seriously, it's taking the game seriously].

All four authors and artists under consideration here turn a critical eye toward the *Recherche*, the author self-reflexively and in advance, the three followers retrospectively but in a manner having a direct and formative bearing on the development of their own voices in their respective disciplines. Just as Proust uses the *Recherche*, in a sense, to illustrate his own conception of the work of art and of literature, Beckett to mark a stage in his apprenticeship as an author (as well as a form of training in writing), and Deleuze to confront what he calls the upright image of thought (of philosophy), Ruiz 'use de son adaptation pour illustrer

sa propre conception de l'art et du cinéma' (Bouquet, p.44) [uses his adaptation to illustrate his own conception of art and of the cinema].

Each of the three followers produces a critical or interpretative commentary which is also a rewriting (re-orientation) in the course of (and simply *of*) their own project. On the one hand, so it is with any author's work which inspires a following or gives rise to a posterity. On the other hand, however, it is the nature of the engagement with philosophy (and thereby with the image, hence philosophy's image of thought) in all three cases to varying degrees of professional formation and aesthetic (and intellectual and ideological) predilection that makes Proust, Beckett, Deleuze and Ruiz an especially suggestive constellation.

Notes

1. Raúl Ruiz, 'Entretien, propos recueillis par Stéphane Bouquet et Emmanuel Burdeau', *Cahiers du cinema*, 535 (1999), pp.46–53 [p.52]. Hereafter referred to as *Entretien*.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: PUF, 1986), pp.21–2. Hereafter referred to as *PS*.
3. An annotation by Samuel Beckett to his own copy of Proust, cited in Deirdre Bair, *Samuel Beckett: A Biography* (London: Vintage, 1990), p.115.
4. 'Pues el delito mayor
   Del hombre es haber nacido',
   [Man's biggest sin
   Is to have been born].
   from Calderón's *La Vida es sueño*, is quoted in Samuel Beckett, *Proust*, in *Proust, and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: John Calder, 1987), p.67, preceded by a reference to 'the sin of having been born'. Hereafter referred to as *P*.
5. See Nicholas Zurbrugg, *Beckett and Proust* (Gerrard's Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988).
6. See chapter 6, 'Les puissances du faux', in Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma II: L'Image-Temps* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1985), pp.165–202. Hereafter referred to as *CII*. Note that, two years prior to his study of Proust, Deleuze had published a study of Nietzsche, *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris: PUF, 1962).
7. This theme is first developed in *Nietzsche et la philosophie* and is expanded in Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968).
8. For Deleuze, only Visconti would have been able to make a film which would have rendered the Proustian conception of time; he is unable to envisage a Losey (a director for whom he had great admiration) which would not adhere to what he names the 'naturalist' 'originary worlds'–'derived milieus' template (*CII*, p.128, n.35). However, Deleuze has not examined the script prepared by Pinter, which comes closer to succeeding in respect of the theme of time than Visconti's script, with its foregrounding of a social and class dimension.
9. See Peter Kravanja, *Proust à l'écran* (Brussels: La lettre volée, 2003).

10. Cf. Zurbrugg's comment on Beckett and Proust as two 'incomparables' whose conjunction lends itself thereby to comparison (Zurbrugg, p.283).
11. See *CII*, p.58.
12. 'Proust est devenu insaisissable, parce qu'il est devenu inséparable de cette quadruple métamorphose qui n'est que le mouvement du livre vers l'oeuvre' [Proust has become ungraspable, because he has become inseparable from that quadruple metamorphosis which is none other than the movement of the book towards the work] [tr. ed.]: Maurice Blanchot, 'L'Expérience de Proust', in *Le livre à venir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), pp.19–37 [p.25]. Hereafter referred to as *LV*.
13. See, notably, *PS*, ch.3.
14. Plato, *The Meno*, tr. G.M A. Grube, in *Classics of Western Philosophy*, ed. Steven M. Cahn, 3rd ed. (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1990), pp.4–27.
15. Debra Nails, *Agora, Academy and the Conduct of Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), p.201.
16. 'l'effet violent d'un signe' (*PS*, p.32) [the violent effect of a sign].
17. Gilles Deleuze, 'Boulez, Proust and Time: "Occupying without counting"', tr. Timothy Murphy, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, Vol.3, No.2 (1998), pp.69–74 [p.71]. Hereafter referred to as *BPT*.
18. Recognition in the Kantian cogito, Deleuze points out in *Différence and Répétition*, relies upon a concord of the faculties, while for the philosopher 'la forme d'identité de l'objet réclame [. . .] un fondement dans l'unité d'un sujet pensant dont toutes les autres facultés doivent être des modes' [the form of the object's identity requires [. . .] a grounding in the unity of a thinking subject, all of whose other faculties must be modalities] (Paris: PUF, 1968), p.174.
19. In recounting how Beckett listened to him recounting the experience of listening in their respective seminars to the philosophical voices of Derrida and Deleuze, André Bernold recalls how 'Beckett écoutait, attentif, hochant la tête d'un air de profond contentement' [Beckett used to listen, attentively, nodding his head with an air of profound contentment]: *L'Amitié de Beckett 1979–1989* (Paris: Hermann, 1992), p.86. On this point see also Mary Bryden, 'Deleuze Reading Beckett', in *Beckett and Philosophy*, ed. Richard Lane, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp.80–92.
20. See 'On dirait l'insurrection des molécules', in 'La peinture des van Velde ou le Monde et le Pantalon', in Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn (London: John Calder, 1983), pp.118–32 [p.128]. Hereafter referred to as *DJ*.
21. Samuel Beckett, 'Proust in Pieces', in *DJ*, pp.63–5 [p.64].
22. Marcel Proust, *Le Temps retrouvé* (Paris: Gallimard/Flammarion, 1986), p.344. Hereafter referred to as *LTR*.
23. Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, tr. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992), p.318. Hereafter referred to as *SLT*.
24. Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p.51.
25. The shortcomings of Beckett as a literary critic of Proust are exhaustively itemized in Zurbrugg's 1988 study.
26. *DJ*, pp.19–33.

27. See, for example, Zurbrugg's characterization of *Worstward Ho*, *Ill Seen Ill Said* and *Company* as being 'as intransigently anti-Proustian as all of Beckett's earlier fictions' (Zurbrugg, p.282).
28. Vincent Kaufmann, *L'Equivoque épistolaire* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1991), p.32.
29. See *Entretien*, p.49.
30. Stéphane Bouquet, 'Tous en scène, à propos du *Temps retrouvé* de Raoul Ruiz', *Cahiers du cinema*, No. 535 (1999), pp.43–5 [p.44].
31. Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (London: Picador, 1973), p.108.
32. Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1969).
33. Marcel Proust, *Contre Sainte-Beuve, précédé de Pastiches et mélanges et suivi de Essais et articles*, ed. Pierre Clarac (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

8

Proust, Deleuze and the Spiritual Automaton*

Patrick ffrench

I start from the premise that beyond the book *Proust et les signes*, Proust has a structural importance in the work of Gilles Deleuze that merits extensive analysis. I will be specifically concerned here, however, with a concept that Deleuze encounters in Proust's novel *A la recherche du temps perdu* and which is subsequently plugged into other machines, in particular the cinema machine. The concept is a phrase: 'un peu de temps à l'état pur' [a little time in the pure state]. This is a phrase in the sense that Proust's narrator refers to 'la petite phrase' [the little phrase]: a relation of intensities. It is a concept in the sense that Deleuze and Guattari intend by this word: a construction of differential relations, or a 'tout fragmentaire' [fragmentary whole].[1] I will thus be looking at the use to which Deleuze puts the phrase in *Cinéma II: L'Image-temps*. To my knowledge the phrase occurs twice in this volume, unattributed, with quotation marks on the first occurrence, and without on the second. It is thus not a quotation, nor an allusion, nor an element of intertextuality, properly speaking; it is a refrain connected to the proper name Proust, to the extent that one encounters it in his work.

One encounters it in *Le Temps retrouvé*, the final volume of Proust's novel: the narrator has just undergone a series of the experiences of involuntary memory that punctuate the work and is beginning the theoretical construction of a philosophy and an aesthetics premised upon the analysis of the sensations and the experiences they induce.[2] The experience, Proust's narrator proposes, is neither of the present nor of the past, since it pertains to both and is therefore in some sense outside time, a bit of time in the pure state. The phrase designates a temporality outside or distinct from chronological succession, outside time considered as change relative to position, or movement; it designates time as the state within which change and succession take place. Time as change and succession,

or as movement, lies 'coiled' ('enroulé') within the essence or pure state of time – such is Deleuze's neo-Platonic thesis in *Proust et les signes*.[3] Time in its pure state is a time of birth and creation; in Deleuze's *Le Pli* we see Proust's phrase linked to 'the event', where 'what happens' bifurcates from what does not.[4] Time in the pure state is not an archaic origin as such but the potential of time within which what happens as well as what does not are held.

In *L'Image-temps*, on the first occurrence of the phrase, Deleuze is at pains to identify the cinema of the movement-image as distinct from that of the time-image.[5] In the former, the image is dominated by the movement of a body in space, and cinematic time is measured by bodily movement, rather as cinema itself emerged, arguably, from the photogrammatic motion studies of Muybridge and Marey. Time measured as movement parallels in Proust the account of experience in terms of a succession of present moments which reveal nothing of the essence of time or experience to the narrator. In Deleuze's text the phrase occurs in the context of a discussion of the films of Yasujiro Ozu, specifically in *Late Spring*, where a shot of a weeping girl is seen between two shots of a vase, a still life, which is nevertheless not stilled, since time is still passing. Change – the emergence of tears – occurs within the framework of time as the state within which change occurs. Thus the image gives us a direct perception of time 'in the pure state', as Proust's narrator registers the connection of two sensations within the frame of time as the (pure) state in which change and event take place.

It is with the second occurrence of the phrase that I will be concerned in this essay.[6] It arises in the chapter on 'Thought and Cinema', where Deleuze returns to the early twentieth-century theorists of what he calls a 'sublime' conception of film, advanced by Epstein, Elie Faure, Eisenstein, and later, differently, by Artaud (*CII*, p.205). Crudely, this conception holds that cinema has the capacity, through the moving image, to shock the thinker in us into emergence. The 'spiritual automaton' (*CII*, p.203) in us awakens as a result of the shock to the cerebral cortex of the direct perception of movement, the perception of a correlative automatism in the image. The 'sublime conception' of cinema, its violence upon thought, is elaborated in Eisenstein's dialectical theory and practice of *montage*, but soon declines or is deviated into the violence of the represented, or is exploited fascistically as propaganda. Its last gasp, but paradoxically, its first hope, lies in Artaud, in his brief and abortive engagement with cinema and subsequent rejection of it. Here, however, it is not the thinker that surfaces as a result of the shock of cinema; what the viewer is confronted with is the paralysis of thought, the theft or

flight ('vol') of thought at the heart of thought. What cinema, through direct visual and aural shock, causes to come to consciousness is a vortex at the heart of thought, a black hole, through which thought is vampiristically sucked away. Artaud, for a moment, holds that cinema can communicate this, and rejects cinema when it appears that this possibility is confined either within the (surreal) expression of the imaginary or oneiric, or contents itself with abstract formal experimentation.

Deleuze finds in the critical work of Jean-Louis Schefer, specifically his untranslated book *L'homme ordinaire du cinéma*,[7] a contemporary vision close to that of Artaud. What Schefer foregrounds in the films he considers are those filmic moments where the world appears monstrous, freakish, inchoate or in some sense primeval. The true – or ordinary – experience of cinema, he argues, is the suspension of the world. He means the suspension of the world as representation, where we have a perception of the inchoate flux of being. For Deleuze, Schefer's conception of cinema finds a contemporary realization in the films of Philippe Garrel, in 'ces grains dansants qui ne sont pas faits pour être vus, cette poussière lumineuse qui n'est pas une préfiguration des corps, ces flocons de neige et nappes de suie' (*CII*, p.219) [those dancing grains which are not made to be seen, that luminous dust which is not a prefiguration of bodies, those flakes of snow and blankets of soot]. Schefer himself finds this 'suspension of the world' (*CII*, p.220) in certain images from Dreyer and Kuroswawa, among others, where what one sees is somehow 'before' the image or this side of it – 'tout un en-deça de l'image' (*CII*, p.220) [a whole dimension to this side of the image]. This is not a veil pulled over things but thought without body or image, 'pensée sans corps et sans image' (*CII*, p.220) [a thought without body or image].

The visual form – though one might more appropriately associate it with the Bataillean *informe* – of such a disembodied thought gives cinema the equivalent of the impossibility or impotence, the *néant* at the heart of thought, for which Blanchot, Deleuze adds, provides the diagnostic in literature (*CII*, p.218). This impossibility, paralysis or suspension is *also*, however, the *source* of thought, that from which it derives its possibility. In this typically Blanchotian aporia, thought is born from the confrontation with its own impotence, its petrification. Likewise, the inchoate image 'without a body' '[fait] naître la pensée de sa propre impossibilité' (*CII*, p.220) [gives birth to thought out of its own impossibility]. The suspension of the world gives visibility to thought, not as object, 'mais comme un acte qui ne cesse de naître et de se dérober dans la pensée' (*CII*, p.220) [but as an act which is constantly emerging and being concealed in thought]. The inchoate or incoherent quality of the image gives

visibility to thought as impotence, petrification, which is the heart and source from which thought arises. For Deleuze, this describes the 'ordinary' experience of the viewer, 'the ordinary man of cinema' ('l'homme ordinaire du cinema'), in whom is awakened the 'spiritual automaton', the thinker within us whose thought stems from the paralysis of thought. Deleuze writes:

> C'est la description de *l'homme ordinaire du cinéma*: l'automate spirituel, 'homme mécanique', 'mannequin expérimental', ludion en nous, corps inconnu que nous n'avons que derrière la tête, et dont l'âge n'est ni le nôtre ni celui de notre enfance, mais un peu de temps à l'état pur. (*CII*, p.220)
>
> [This is the description of the *ordinary man in the cinema*: the spiritual automaton, 'mechanical man', 'experimental dummy', Cartesian diver in us, unknown body which we have only at the back of our heads, and whose age is neither ours nor that of our childhood, but a little time in the pure state.]

The Proustian refrain intervenes to distinguish the temporality of the spiritual automaton from time in the normal run of events, so to speak, and from childhood. Indeed, while Schefer, in *L'homme ordinaire*, sought to relate the affection of cinema to childhood and to Oedipal crime, the cinema taking us back to the chamber of our infancy and repeating the trauma of that time (Schefer, p.79), Deleuze wants to disengage the birth of the spiritual automaton here from any reference to childhood or to psychoanalysis. As in *Anti-Œdipus*, the body without organs, which bears many points of contact with the spiritual automaton, is postulated outside the framework of the Oedipalized family. That the temporality of the automaton in us is in the pure state also signals, I think, that it is not individual but trans-individual, thought insofar as it is actualized and singularized in each of us but not specific to me, a singular and pre-subjective affect which nevertheless traverses each body and arises within it as an organic machine that persists beneath or behind it. That its temporality is in the pure state suggests that it is not specific to the timespan of a personal life, the life of 'a subject', but pertains rather to 'a life' in the sense Deleuze will give to these words in his final testamentary article 'Immanence: a life . . .'.[8]

The age of the spiritual automaton, nevertheless, is only a *bit*, a *fragment*, of time in the pure state, which is to say that thought emerges only as a flash within a larger context of chronological time and of representation, from which the thinker is absent. Rather in the same way,

the extra-temporal being in Proust's narrator breathes only in those small fortuitous instants made possible by the *madeleine*, the paving stone, and so on. These moments, or perhaps, since they are cut out of chronological time, these vacancies, are nevertheless moments of creation and birth, acts, in which thought is incessantly arising and being concealed.

Rather than pursue Deleuze's discussion through the sequence of concepts of sensory-motor paralysis, the intolerable world, and the necessity of belief – to which I will return – and through his commentary of Dreyer and Garrel, I want to return momentarily to Proust. Indeed, if the birth of thought is in its pure state and is inchoate, disembodied and non-individual, this seems to pertain to the beginning of the *Recherche* itself, the flux from which narration emerges. In the fifth paragraph of the first volume, Proust's narrator writes:

> quand je m'éveillais au milieu de la nuit, comme j'ignorais où je me trouvais, je ne savais même pas au premier instant qui j'étais; j'avais seulement dans sa simplicité première, le sentiment de l'existence comme il peut frémir au fond d'un animal; j'étais plus dénué que l'homme des cavernes.[9]
>
> [when I woke in the middle of the night, since I did not know where I was, I did not even understand in the first moment who I was; all I had, in its original simplicity, was the sense of existence as it may quiver in the depths of an animal; I was more bereft than a caveman.][10]

While this pertains exactly, it seems to me, to the notion of life on the threshold which Deleuze elaborates à propos of Dickens' Riderhood in his final article, this connection between the opening of the *Recherche* and the temporality of the spiritual automaton is possible only if we succeed in disengaging Proust's narrator's statements from reference to a dream state, in which case they would pertain to an imaginary pocket within thought and be limited therein.

We can note, nevertheless, that the 'I' of the opening pages is disembodied, unidentifiable, not yet located, temporally or spatially. Earlier, the narrator had written:

> Je me rendormais, et parfois je n'avais plus que de courts réveils d'un instant, le temps [...] d'ouvrir les yeux pour fixer le kaléidoscope de l'obscurité, de goûter grâce à une lueur momentanée de conscience le sommeil où étaient plongés les meubles, la chambre, le tout dont je n'étais qu'une petite partie et à l'insensibilité duquel je retournais vite m'unir. (*DCCS*, p.10)[11]

> [I would go back to sleep, and sometimes afterwards woke only briefly for a moment, long enough to [...] open my eyes and stare at the kaleidoscope of the darkness, savour in a momentary glimmer of consciousness the sleep into which were plunged the furniture, the room, that whole of which I was only a small part and whose insensibility I would soon return to share.] (*TWS*, p.8)

The incapacity of thought to grasp objects or itself until the kaleidoscope of rooms arrives at stasis – would this not also correspond to the 'suspension of the world'? Is there not also an intriguing proximity suggested here between the experience of the narrator in the opening pages of the novel and the ordinary man of cinema? Before objects appear as visual forms, before representation, is there not a kaleidoscopic visual flux, within a dark chamber? The early pages of Proust's novel feature several such references to primitive cinematographic technologies, perhaps not simply because such contemporary gadgets and other automata are ready to hand but because the experiential and affective situation described is similar. A passage in Schefer's book suggests this much:

> Dans le cinéma du spectateur se compose aussi cette chambre expérimentale (c'est une chambre flottante quelque part hors du monde, et dans une nuit artificielle); expérimentale seulement parce qu'aucune solitude, c'est à dire aucun temps propre pensant le monde n'y augmente. Cette chambre ne nous habite pas – c'est plutôt l'espace d'une *fuite impossible maintenue* – parce que le lieu de notre détresse est cet espace aussitôt sans borne où aucune image ne réside profondément et n'a pouvoir de se fixer. (p.92)
>
> [In the cinema which pertains to the spectator this experimental chamber (which is a room floating somewhere outside the world, and in an artificial darkness) is thus constituted, experimental only because no solitude, that is to say no proper time thinking the world can add to it. This room does not inhabit us – it is rather the space of an impossible flight which persists – because the place of our distress is this immediately limitless space in which no image can establish itself and has any power to fix itself.] (My translation)

In the passage from Proust cited above, the narrator describes a threshold of awakening and of conscience which makes it possible to fix or to arrest kaleidoscopic movement. While the narrator is asleep, 'les meubles, la chambre, le tout', the totality of which he is but a part, are in motion: when awake, he is able to arrest this movement. The insensibility of

'le tout' is structurally allied with 'le kaléidoscope de l'obscurité', itself an oxymoronic refrain, suggesting that darkness, 'le tout dont je n'étais qu'une petite partie' is a moving flux, an automatic cinema already projected, whose time is in the pure state.[12] Would we thus go to the cinema to sleep, and paradoxically awaken that automatic thinker in us through the encounter with a totality we cannot grasp, an insensibility in which we are immersed?

The threshold between the movement of the totality and the individuated space-time of the subject is, however, not a line; it has a thickness, a hesitation 'au seuil des temps et des formes' (*DCCS*, p.13) ['on the threshold of times and shapes' (*TWS*, p.6)].[13] Between insensitivity and fixity the memory of the narrator's body intervenes to present his consciousness with a series of different rooms. It is as if the speed of the internal cinema, 'le kaléidoscope de l'obscurité', decreases enough to allow the formation of a distinct image, before reaching the stasis of a certain location. The succession of rooms, the threshold on which form is not yet fixed and existence not yet individuated, is semiotically allied with the moving image of cinema in the following passage, a little further on in the text:

> Ces évocations tournoyantes et confuses ne duraient jamais que quelques secondes; souvent ma brève incertitude du lieu où je me trouvais ne distinguait pas mieux les unes des autres les diverses suppositions dont elle était faite, que nous n'isolons, en voyant un cheval courir, les positions successives que nous montre le kinétoscope. (*DCCS*, p.14)
>
> [These revolving, confused evocations never lasted for more than a few seconds; often, in my brief uncertainty about where I was, I did not distinguish the various suppositions of which it was composed any better than we isolate, when we see a horse run, the successive positions shown to us by a kinetoscope.] (*TWS*, p.11)

However, the cinema of this threshold, the cinema of embodied memory, is not photogrammatic, does not have the character of a series of fixed frames. Proust may or may not have been familiar with Eadweard Muybridge's 1878 photogrammatic motion study of the horse 'Occident' galloping, and is more likely to have come across the kinetoscope as a form of public entertainment. But when we independently see a horse run we do not see it as a series of photogrammatic frames. When we see a horse run for three seconds in the cinema we do not see this as 3×24 photogrammatic frames, despite the fact that at a plastic level of

materiality this is what it is. If we attend to the equivalences and distinctions established in Proust's sentence we see that the moving image or the image of movement would be more like an uncertainty made up of various indistinguishable suppositions. The narrator no more distinguishes the supposed rooms than we do the positions of the horse which the kinetoscope allows us to see, nor the photogrammatic frames of which the filmic image of a moving horse is made up. The moving image of cinema would be equivalent, here, to the incapacity of thought to fix, to articulate a supposition, through an encounter with a totality in movement; the impotence of thought is here paradoxically allied to the inability to draw stasis and certainty from speed.

However, someone thinks, someone writes 'je'. In 'je ne savais pas au premier instant qui j'étais' there is a consciousness that does not know, which can write, retrospectively, '*I* did not know'. A first experience of the *néant* is recorded by a consciousness that has overcome the terror of the flux, the inchoate paralysis of thought. Perhaps the operation of the sublime is at work, which for Deleuze requires an act of belief. Following the Proustian refrain of 'a bit of time in the pure state' in *The Time-Image*, Deleuze develops an account of contemporary cinema in which the impossibility or paralysis of thought is induced by the crisis in the portrayal of sensory-motion, and by the resultant confrontation, at a purely visual level, with an intolerable world: 'La rupture sensori-motrice fait de l'homme un voyant qui se trouve frappé par quelque chose d'intolérable dans le monde, et confronté à quelque chose d'impensable dans la pensée' (*CII*, pp.220–1) [The sensory-motor rupture makes man a seer who finds himself struck by something intolerable in the world, and confronted with something unthinkable in thought]. The Artaudian paralysis of thought here becomes an incapacity to tolerate the visual, as if, previously, the image of movement were a neurotic defence that kept us from seeing what was there to be seen, from the act of seeing with our own eyes. Cinema confronts us with a visual paralysis, an incapacity to tolerate the visual, not as exceptional horror or represented violence which neurotically deflects, but as banality ('la saisie de l'intolérable même dans le quotidien ou l'insignifiant' (*CII*, p.222) [the seizure of the intolerable even in the everyday or insignificant]. What is intolerable is the banality of everyday things. Nothing is possible, whence the paralysis of movement, of thought and of the body.

There is perhaps a corresponding moment in Proust's novel, the false end at the end of *Du côté de chez Swann*. Confronted with the vulgarity of fashions of the time, in the Bois de Boulogne, compared to the elegance he associates with the clothes, carriage and demeanour of Mme

Swann from an earlier age, the narrator confesses that he has lost all belief, all faith in the spectacle, and thus cannot endow it with the consistency of an existence. He can only interject, like an attenuated version of Marlowe's 'The horror', 'Quelle horreur' [How awful!], twice, and substitute a fetishistic attachment to his memories.

> Et toutes ces parties nouvelles du spectacle, je n'avais plus de croyance à y introduire pour leur donner la consistance, l'unité, l'existence; elles passaient éparses devant moi, au hasard, sans vérité, ne contenant en elles aucune beauté que mes yeux eussent pu essayer comme autrefois de composer. C'étaient des femmes quelconques, en l'élégance desquelles je n'avais aucune foi et dont les toilettes me semblaient sans importance. (*DCCS*, p.501)
>
> [And I no longer had any belief to infuse into all these new elements of the spectacle, to give them substance, unity, life; they went past scattered before me, randomly, without reality, containing in themselves no beauty that my eyes might have tried as they had in earlier times to form into a composition. These were ordinary women, in whose elegance I had no faith and whose dress seemed to me unimportant.] (*TWS*, p.428)

For Proust's narrator, a false compensation may be found in a fetishistic attachment to the beauties of the past, as if they existed independently of us, but the places of our past do not belong to the world of space, he writes, and the instants we enjoyed are lost. This gives rise to a description of the Bois de Boulogne as a grey, vacant place of death, devoid of human presence, visually intolerable and without consistency. There ends the first volume.

A letter from the author to Jacques Rivière of February 1914 warned against taking this end as definitive, and hints at the direction the novel would take:

> Ce n'est qu'à la fin du livre, et une fois les leçons de la vie comprises, que ma pensée se dévoilera. Celle que j'exprime à la fin du premier volume, dans cette parenthèse sur le Bois de Boulogne que j'ai dressée là comme un simple paravent pour finir et clôturer un livre qui ne pouvait pas pour des raisons matérielles excéder cinq cents pages, est *le contraire* de ma conclusion. Elle est une étape, d'apparence subjective et dilettante, vers *la plus objective et croyante des conclusions*.[14] Si on en induisait que ma pensée est un scepticisme désenchantante, ce serait absolument comme si un spectateur ayant vu à la fin du premier acte

> de *Parsifal*, ce personnage ne rien comprendre à la cérémonie et être chassé par Gurnemantz, supposait que Wagner a voulu dire que la simplicité du cœur ne conduit à rien.
>
> [It is not until the end of the book, and once the lessons of life have been learnt, that my thinking will be unveiled. That which I express at the end of the first volume, in the parenthesis on the Bois de Boulogne which I put there simply as a screen to end and close a book which for material reasons could not exceed five hundred pages, is the *opposite* of my conclusion. It is a stage, apparently subjective and dilettantish, in a movement towards *the most objective and believing of conclusions*. If one inferred from this that my thought is a disenchanting skepticism, this would be as if, having seen the end of the first act of *Parsifal* where the youth understands nothing of the ceremony and is banished by Gurnemantz, a spectator were to suppose that Wagner had meant to say that simplicity of the heart leads nowhere.][15]

What might Proust mean, Rivière might well have wondered, by 'la plus objective et croyante des conclusions'? In what sense might belief be objective? To conclude, I will suggest that Deleuze offers us a way of understanding this.

An act of faith is needed to overcome the state of paralysis which afflicts us when faced with the intolerable banality of the visual. It is necessary, Deleuze writes, to believe in the world and to believe in our link to the world, to believe in the body – despite and even because of the impossibility of this link. It is the task of the modern cinema, he adds, to film this belief, drawing from the paralysis of thought, of vision and of the body the conditions of a higher birth:

> L'automate spirituel est dans la situation psychique du voyant, qui voit d'autant mieux et plus loin qu'il ne peut réagir, c'est-à-dire penser. Quelle est alors la subtile issue? Croire, non pas à un autre monde, mais au lien de l'homme et du monde, à l'amour ou à la vie, y croire comme à l'impossible, à l'impensable, qui pourtant ne peut être que pensé. (*CII*, p.221)
>
> [The spiritual automaton is in the psychic situation of the seer, who sees all the better and further since he cannot react, that is, think. Which, then, is the subtle way out? To believe, not in another world, but in a link between man and the world, in love or life, to believe in this as in the impossible, the unthinkable, which nonetheless cannot but be thought.]

> Il faut que le cinéma filme, non pas le monde, mais la croyance à ce monde, notre seul lien. [...] Chrétiens ou athées, dans notre universelle schizophrénie, *nous avons besoin de raisons de croire en ce monde*. (*CII*, p.223; Deleuze's italics)
>
> [The cinema must film, not the world, but belief in this world, our only link. [...] Whether Christians or atheists, in our universal schizophrenia, *we need reasons to believe in this world*.]
>
> Nous devons croire au corps, mais comme au germe de vie, à la graine qui fait éclater les pavés, qui s'est conservée, perpétuée dans le saint suaire ou les bandelettes de la momie, et qui témoigne pour la vie, dans ce monde-ci tel qu'il est. (*CII*, p.225)
>
> [We must believe in the body, but as in the germ of life, as in the seed which splits open the paving stones, which has been preserved and perpetuated in the holy shroud or the mummy's bandages, and which bears witness to life, in this world as it is.]

In Deleuze's account, the rupture with totality effected in modern cinema leaves us no alternative but such a belief. Drawn from the pre-formal, 'internal' cinema into the fixity of representations and the intolerable banality of the visual, Proust's narrator must also believe in the material life that persists as if beneath the representations in which he no longer believes. He will also rupture the false appearance of the present, induce paralysis through the encounter with other temporalities in whose reality and truth he comes to believe. These acts of belief are properly those of literary creation.

Why is this belief not explained by a theology? To answer this question would require an extensive engagement with the thought of Deleuze, and with his encounters with the philosophies of Spinoza, Bergson and Nietzsche, to name only three. However, it is possible to give a short answer. What induces paralysis and is found intolerable is the caducity of a certain representation of the world and of life, at the threshold of which movement, and thought, find themselves blocked. As if we think we know what a body is, but this body is exhausted, and on the other side of this exhaustion we sense that of which a body might be capable. What is demanded is a transmutation of values, a turn which carries the entirety of non-belief and of exhausted representation over into an affirmation of the possible. As Deleuze proposes, this is not belief in another world; it is, rather, belief in another world which has led to non-belief in this world. It may be rather more difficult to read Proust's trajectory, following the moment of nothingness at the end of *Du côté de chez Swann*, according to an immanent rather than transcendent schema. Does Proust not redeem

the mendacious banality of his world through belief in the 'other world' of literature? Perhaps so; but a non-metaphysical answer may be proposed in two areas: at one level, the world in which the narrator, and the writer, find belief, is the world of the phrase and the matter, the sensible matter, of the phrase – language as matter immanent to this world and not as transcendent realm of ideas. Secondly, the redemptive factor in the *Recherche* is the belief in a temporality beyond the present, in a pure state of time whose reality is of becoming and of the possible. Literature is 'true life' ['la vraie vie', *LTR*, p.202] in this sense, according to Proust, as, in the final words of Proust's novel, it gives access to a vision of men in the monstrous, elongated dimension of becoming. This conclusion, as Proust remarks in the letter cited earlier, moves from a state of disenchanted skepticism – our universal schizophrenia, in Deleuze's words – to '*the most objective and believing of conclusions*'.

Notes

* This essay is dedicated to the late Jérôme Cornette.

1. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1991), p.21.
2. Marcel Proust, *Le Temps retrouvé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), p.109. Hereafter referred to as *LTR*.
3. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: PUF, 1964), p.59. Hereafter referred to as *PS*.
4. Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1988), p.109.
5. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma II: L'image-temps* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1985), p.27. Hereafter referred to as *CII*.
6. I have considered the first occurrence of the phrase in *The Time-Image* in 'A Bit of Time in the Pure State', in *Time and the Image*, ed. C. Gill (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp.161–71.
7. Jean-Louis Schefer, *L'homme ordinaire du cinema* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980).
8. Gilles Deleuze, 'L'immanence: une vie…', in *Deux régimes de fous*, ed. David Lapoujade (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 2003), pp.359–63.
9. Marcel Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann* (Paris: Folio, 1987), p.12. Hereafter referred to as *DCCS*.
10. Marcel Proust, *The Way by Swann's*, tr. Lydia Davis (London: Penguin, 2003), p.9. Hereafter referred to as *TWS*.
11. The phrase elided here in the square brackets is 'd'entendre les craquements organiques des boiseries' ['hear the organic creak of the woodwork']. An objection may thus be made here – that it is sound that intervenes first, that sound is in advance of vision in its irruption into totality and in the shift towards individuating location. We should not therefore ignore the role of the acoustic in cinema and in the already moving cinema from which we are drawn out as individuated beings, nor ignore Deleuze's attention to sound in the two books on cinema. Here in Proust it is as if the first deceleration of the kaleidoscope of obscurity is brought about by the uncontrollable irruption

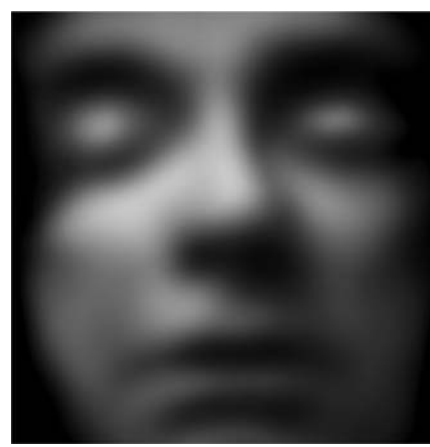
of a sound retrospectively identified as that of the wooden floor, into the continuum. Sound would thus function as the first individuator.

12. Proust may also be alluding to Baudelaire's essay 'Le peintre de la vie moderne', in which the man of the crowd is described as a 'kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness': 'Thus the lover of universal life moves into the crowd as though into an enormous reservoir of electricity. He, the lover of life, may also be compared to a mirror as vast as this crowd; to a kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness, which with every one of its movements presents a pattern of life, in all its multiplicity, and the flowing grace of all the elements that go to compose life', Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life', tr. P.E. Charvet, in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, eds V. Kolocotroni, J. Goldman, O. Taxidou (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988), p.105. Baudelaire's proposition, that such a man, exemplified by Constantin Guys, would be like an apparatus that could reflect in each of its movements the multifarious and multiplicitous patterns of life, echoes Proust's description of the threshold consciousness in these pages, except for the fact that for Proust's narrator such a consciousness of totality has become a lot more difficult, as if the kaleidoscopic, multiple totality could only now be grasped at the cost of a sacrifice of located consciousness or indeed of subjectivity as such. The kaleidoscopic totality, 'le tout', and thought, appear mutually exclusive, either side of a threshold, and the life that might have been reflected in this kaleidoscope must now be (re)constituted through an act of creation.
13. 'Et avant même que ma pensée, qui hésitait au seuil des temps et des formes, eût identifié le logis en rapprochant les circonstances, lui – mon corps – se rappelait pour chacun le genre du lit, la place des portes [...] avec la pensée que j'avais en m'y endormant et que je retrouvais au réveil' (*DCCS*, p.6). ['And even before my mind, which hesitated on the thresholds of times and shapes, had identified the house by reassembling the circumstances, it – my body – would recall the kind of bed in each one, the location of the doors [...] along with the thought I had had as I fell asleep and that I had recovered upon waking'] (*TWS*, p.11).
14. Author's italics.
15. Marcel Proust, *Correspondance*, ed. P. Kolb (Paris: Plon, 1985), Vol. XIII, p.99. Author's translation.

9

'Staring Sightlessly': Proust's Presence in Beckett's Absence*

Clark Lunberry



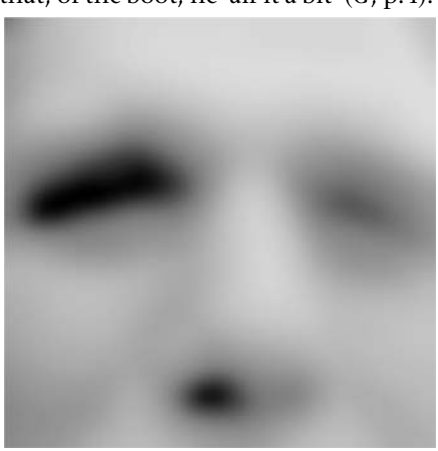
Act Three: It begins and ends with boots, straining to remove them, and a pleading finally for someone to come, for someone to care; Estragon, in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, calls out *'feebly'* to Vladimir, 'Help me!' But as the playwright's critical stage directions then instruct, Estragon *'gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again. As before'*.[1] Finally he concludes, there at the very start of the play, there at the boots – *'pull[ing]* [. . .] *with both hands, panting'* (*G*, p.2) – where nothing has begun, that there is 'Nothing to be done' (*G*, p.4). Beginning at the end, ending at the beginning, the comings and goings – the non-comings, the non-goings – of Estragon and Vladimir settling onto boots, and swollen feet; a very precise picture of pain.

What a way to begin a play, to begin to play, so mundanely, with boots, the ache and tenderness located in the very soles . . . of the feet, of the image . . . of Estragon *'tear[ing] at his boot'*, bending, stooping, *'giving up again'* (*G*, p.3). The pain*ful*ness of the play seen in the straining and the sad, soulful gesture, this sensuous sign of his very real suffering; the body bending, the parabola extending; the simple desire, the immediate need, to remove them, to take off his boots. Nothing more, nothing less; so much in so little. 'Why don't you help me?' (*G*, p.4), Estragon asks of an unlistening Vladimir.

Moments later, the boots do, with great effort, finally come off, just as Vladimir absent-mindedly soliloquizes about nothing in particular of all that appalls him – '[. . .] appalled. (*With emphasis*.) AP-PALLED' (*G*, p.4)' – to an unlistening Estragon who is single-mindedly thinking about the specifically appalling condition of his aching feet. Beckett parenthetically describes what follows, again in a rich stage direction, concrete instructions that seem ready-made to be pictured into physical form:

> (*Estragon with a supreme effort succeeds in pulling off his boot. He peers inside it, feels about inside it, turns it upside down, shakes it, looks on the ground to see if anything has fallen out, finds nothing, feels inside it again, staring sightlessly before him*.) [*G*, p.4]

'Well?' Vladimir abruptly inquires of the staring Estragon. Nothing. 'There's nothing', Estragon lamely reports, 'to show'. While the suddenly interested Vladimir, expecting something more from *this* show, urges Estragon who is now described as '*examining his foot*' to 'try and put [the boot] on again', suggesting with the odd request that by repeating the removal, wilfully going through its gestured motions once more, something might finally 'show' itself (*G*, p.4). However, Estragon – resisting Vladimir's peculiar command, his directorial injunction – keeps the boot off and sits idly, insisting instead that, of the boot, he 'air it a bit' (*G*, p.4).



Of this banal exchange between Beckett's two misfit characters, who would have thought that there might be something more to 'show' from something as simple (though painful) as the removal of a pair of misfitting boots? For it appears that the taking off of the boots wasn't only, or all, about the pain that they were causing poor Estragon, but that something more had been desired or expected by their removal – something to be shown, something to be seen. Something more than just the tired old feet of Estragon and the empty boot, and empty Estragon left '*staring sightlessly*', having hoped instead for something insightful to stare at. But what might that have been? In the boot, on the foot – what was to be shown? And what,

finally, could not, would not *be* shown? Once done, nothing done, once seen, nothing seen; Estragon pitiably '*examining his foot*', airing his boot, and Vladimir then caustically concluding, 'There's man all over for you, blaming on his boots the faults of his feet' (*G*, p.4). Still, considering the scene and the situation, what else was Estragon to blame his faults upon, *but* the boots, tight and ill-fitting, biting at his soles, blistering his heels and toes?

Act Two: It begins and ends with boots, reaching to remove them, in a state of exhaustion and despair, after a long train journey from the city to the sea. Finally he arrives, there at last, at the Grand Hotel at Balbec. The young narrator, Marcel, in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, finds himself unhappily situated in the disorienting confines of the unfamiliar hotel room. While his beloved and ageing grandmother, joining him on the journey (and as the remembering narrator describes her, 'still hardly grey'), comes to him from the adjacent room and stoops down to help her exceedingly sensitive grandson – 'Oh, do let me!', she dotingly implores.[2] As she then gently takes off his boots, to put him reassuringly at peace. And, in a temporary sense, at peace, he is put. The devoted grandmother unbuttons the boots, comforts and calms the suffering boy, easing him into the hotel habits that will slowly domesticate this grandly imagined room in the Grand Hotel into the familiar intimacy of a temporary home, away from home. The boots are pictured there, neatly now, placed beneath the hotel's bed; a very precise picture of pain, averted and appeased.

Fast-forward, some years ahead, and to a year after this same grandmother's death (an intervening conclusion to a life which was always – unnoticed by the distracted narrator – already well under way in that initial scene with the removed boots; had the younger grandson only possessed the ability to see what was right before his eyes). An older Marcel has travelled again to the sea, again to the Grand Hotel, even staying in the same room as before. Once more exhausted from his travels and disoriented – as always – by the disruptions of his orderly day and the loss of his consoling hauntings of habit, *this* time, Marcel finds himself alone with his suffering, with no one to comfort him, no one to witness his despair, no one to whom he might cry out for help; 'nothing to be done' (*G*, p.4), for indeed, no one is now listening. In this state of nervous fatigue and domestic distress brought on by his travels (grandly described by the narrator as nothing less than 'the disruption of my entire being' [*RTP*, II, p.783]), he must again remove his boots, perhaps the very same boots as before, the ones that his now dead grandmother had years before stooped down to unbutton. The body bending, the

parabola extending. As the recollecting narrator recalls it, 'I bent down slowly and cautiously to take off my boots, trying to master my pain' (*RTP*, II, p.783).

Suddenly, however, with that stooping gesture of reaching for the boots and, as Proust writes, 'scarcely ha[ving] [...] touched the topmost button' (*RTP*, II, p.783), the recollecting narrator voluntarily narrates this miraculous, *in*voluntary event, the profane revelation, of being abruptly 'filled with an unknown, a divine presence [...] the being who had come to my rescue, saving me from barrenness of spirit [...] I had just perceived, stooping over my fatigue [...] my real grandmother [...] I now recaptured the living reality in a complete and involuntary recollection' (*RTP*, II, p.783). Bending down, removing the boots, and in that single, unrepeatable moment, the narrator's revealing insight now suddenly seen, something ghostly shown, 'phantasms' of a death, both defying and defined, arising from out of an unbuttoned boot.

Act Four: In his early, prescient essay on Marcel Proust from 1931, a young Samuel Beckett examines several specific episodes in *Remembrance of Things Past* where the narrator Marcel abruptly sees before him evidence of time's corrosive invasion, signs of decline that can no longer be ignored or denied.[3] In one of the more poignant and well known scenes described by Beckett, the young Marcel returns rapidly to Paris from his travels in order to be with his, *not* just ageing, but now ailing grandmother (*RTP*, II, pp.141–3). This pivotal section of Proust's vast narrative falls chronologically between the two with the boots depicted moments ago – the first, with the grandmother stooping to unbutton the boots (with the younger Marcel oblivious to the grandmother's encroaching mortality); the second without her, and Marcel stooping alone (but with the grandmother's phantasmatic return from the dead, belatedly confirming her very deadness).

The day before, in Doncières, Marcel had spoken with his grandmother on the telephone, hearing a voice almost unrecognizable, so different, Beckett writes, from the one 'that he had been accustomed

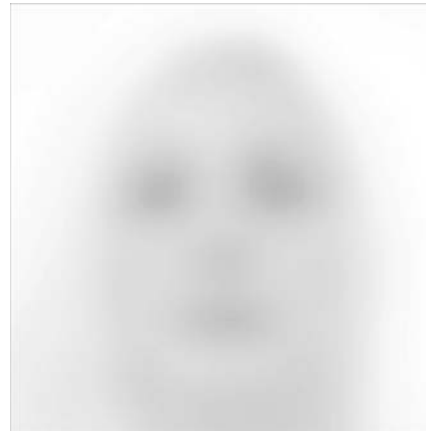
to follow on the open score of her face that he does not recognise it as hers' (*P*, pp.26–7). Soon after, Beckett notes, having returned rapidly to Paris, Marcel arrives at his grandmother's home and quietly, unannounced and unseen, enters the drawing-room where, turned away, she is sitting alone, resting and reading. But, as Beckett states, the unseen narrator, the unseen spectator, precisely because he *is* at that moment *unseen* by his grandmother, suddenly feels 'he is not there because she does not know that he is there. He is present at his own absence' (*P*, p.27). The domestic scene disrupted, the familiar sentiment disturbed (as if the known home had abruptly transformed itself into a profoundly unfamiliar hotel), '[h]is eye', Beckett writes, 'functions with the cruel precision of a camera [...]. And he realises with horror that his grandmother is dead, long since and many times [...]. This mad old woman, drowsing over her book, overburdened with years, flushed and coarse and vulgar, is a stranger whom he has never seen' (*P*, pp.27–8).

'Never seen', he says, until that moment, at which point it's too late; his grandmother is already dead, 'long since and many times', as if buried alive by the burdensome weight of the moment's own oblivion. Or, as Marcel himself soon concludes of this revealing encounter with his grandmother, indeed, having seen it suddenly as the single audience member to its grave unfolding:

> [w]e never see the people who are dear to us save in the animated system, the perpetual motion of our love for them, which, before allowing the images that their faces present to reach us, seizes them in its vortex and flings them back upon the idea that we have always had of them, makes them adhere to it, coincides with it [...]. Every habitual glance is an act of necromancy, each face that we love, a mirror of the past. (*RTP*, II, p.142)

Something of this harrowing moment, as examined and described so richly by Beckett – of death's presentiment, or *pre*viewing, indeed, of death's rehearsal – recalls a theatrical enactment of vanishing and loss within the strict confines of the grandmother's drawing-room. As if upon a stage, within a kind of laboratory of light, one sees – constructed by Proust, recounted by Beckett – this vivid installation of time itself, a quietly dramatic space of lucid awareness, and of what Proust elsewhere describes as '[...] the morbid phenomena of which [my grandmother's] body was the theatre [...]' (*RTP*, II, p.308).

This depicted scene in which the narrator finds himself suddenly confronted by this 'morbid' theatre of the mortal body, revealing itself so materially, so unexpectedly in his grandmother's drawing room, reads

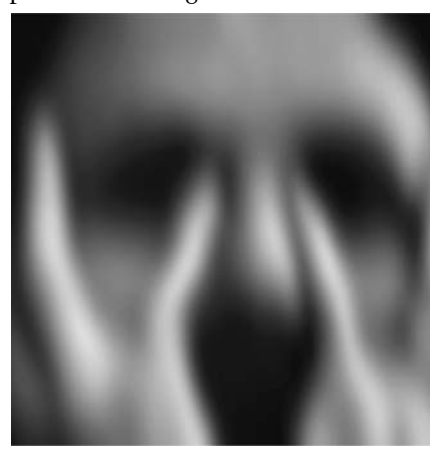


now like one that Beckett was likely to have found instructive for so many of his own future stagings, his own rehearsals of death, the framed intimacies of decline and disappearance. Undetected, we watch them there, these isolated characters sitting alone in rooms, or together but separately, unseen and unseeing, and in which, so often, to be is to be seen – *Esse est percipi* – and to *not* be seen is to be rendered abruptly absent: '[. . .] present at his *own* absence' (*P*, p.27). (Bringing to mind now Vladimir's insistent question to the mysterious little boy who appears, as if out of nowhere, in *Godot*, 'You're sure you saw me, you won't come and tell me tomorrow that you never saw me!' [*G*, p.106]). Pictured thus in the staged simplicity of the grandmother's drawing room, the alienated eyes of Proust's narrator suddenly see that they have never seen, or, have never seen, *but* to see what it's now too late to see. In which case, it's not quite clear what remains *there* to be seen at all. Or, as Herbert Blau describes the indeterminacy of the perceptual event so frequently faced in Beckett, the preying eyes of characters, and of us in the audience, who are – in the play of sight – 'precipitously about to see something which, in the very activity of perception, *disappears*, as if in fact exhausted in the energy required [. . .] to see it [. . .] the very instruments of perception dematerialize the object; that is, the instruments of perception get in the way'.[4]

Alongside our earlier image of Estragon, his boots finally removed, and '*staring sightlessly before him*' (*G*, p.4), Proust's scene in the grandmother's drawing room, as depicted so acutely by Beckett, can't help but raise the unsettling question as to whether the desiring eyes, staring dumbly at their own blindness (as if into an empty boot), are now seeing *that* – dumb blindness, 'nothing to show' (*G*, p.4). For, absently, this cataracting movement of a disappearance simply will not reveal itself, cannot be conjured. As the grandson, the grandmother are together, but separately – appearing, disappearing – the one watching the other, and us, separately, strangers, watching them both watching.

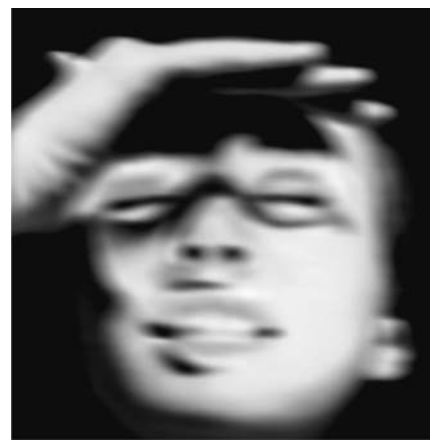
Act One: From out of this blinding scene, this blinding revelation of a feared sightlessness, of nothing to show, and showing it, we return

now – having seen what we *don't* see – back to where we began, to the bending, the stooping, the unbuttoning of boots. Two pairs of boots now, seen adjacently, and these bodies bending – Estragon's, Marcel's, the grandmother's – each of them offering its very precise picture of pain, a picture that presents, as Theodor Adorno characterizes Beckett's mode of relentlessly concrete thought, 'a situation of inwardness [. . .] still preserved in its gestural shell'.[5]



We know of the young Beckett's interest in this other pair of boots, Proust's boots. For Beckett at length describes in his book on Proust the scene with the grandmother – 'a year after her burial' – and the recollected stooping gesture as, among all of the other moments of 'Proustian revelation' (*P*, p.39), the one that is, as Beckett classifies it, 'particularly important' (*P*, p.38). And it is to such specifically, physically repeated and rehearsed gestures as seen in Proust that Beckett was clearly drawn, the stooping over, the body's bending down to the boots, while, as Beckett later characterized it, 'extract[ing] from this gesture' not only the 'lost reality of his grandmother', but also the 'lost reality of himself, the reality of his lost self' (*P*, p.41). Pictured thus with what Beckett had called the 'cruel precision of a camera' (*P*, p.27), it is Proust's poignantly described gesture, contained there in this 'gestural shell', within this Deleuzian 'image of thought' thinking itself through the moving body, that is now abruptly seen as a 'sensuous sign' forcing thought, forcing *us* to think – violently, unremittingly – to which Beckett also seems theatrically drawn. Indeed, drawn from 'the despair of the spectator' (*P*, p.44), there it is, right in front of our eyes, the bent body before us, performing – *live* – its own perceptible decline. We suddenly see it (like a cast shadow), that material moment of matter collapsing,

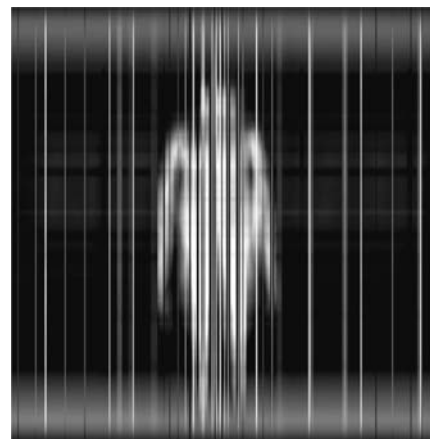
the dense gravity of time's inescapable pull just prior to what Beckett characterizes – not quite dismissively (and as if holding out hope) – as the 'mystic experience' (*P*, p.35), the 'sacred action' (*P*, p.36), when the grandmother's 'divine familiar presence' (*P*, p.41) re-enters the room and returns to Marcel.



But as we soon recognize in *Godot*, as well as in so much of Beckett's subsequent work, no such shadowy presence – divine or otherwise – graces Estragon at the removal of *his* boot, no genies from a bottle, no ghostly grandmothers from a boot, nothing of what Beckett elsewhere characterized – probably dismissively (as if finally removing any remaining vestige of the 'mystic', the 'sacred', the 'divine') – as the 'vulgarity of a plausible concatenation' (*P*, pp.81–2). And however many times, at Vladimir's directorial urging, that Estragon might repeat the gesture of removing the boot, putting it on and taking it off again and again, the forced and voluntary effort will not summon from it the involuntary revelation of something suddenly shown. Or, as Herbert Blau again traces the occlusions of perception seen through the movements of Beckett's described desire: 'It's like something in a photographic studio, presumably coming into sight, the image materializing from the processing itself, and just when you think you've brought it into focus, it disappears. What you thought you were seeing is there and not there' (*SHF*, p.153).

Having 'extract[ed] from [Marcel's] gesture' of bending down to unbutton the boots a subsequent truth, finally and profoundly – existentially received – of his grandmother's death, it appears that Beckett has decisively stopped voluntarily there, at the very edge of this 'gestural shell', at that extracted image of desire reaching for revelation, hoping to be helped – the scene, a poignant sign pointing (as if in a mirror) back to itself pointing. Where the only show is finally the show of *that*. While, as elsewhere described (in Beckett's 'dialogues' on art that accompany his book on Proust), the author himself maintains to the end his 'fidelity to failure' (*P*, p.125), but a failure that offers – as if emerging from out of itself – 'a new occasion, a new term of relation, and of the

act which, unable to act, obliged to act [...] makes [...] an expressive act, even if only of itself, of its impossibility, of its obligation' (*P*, p.125). For at such an impossible site, the ghosts – like Godot – are unarriving, and the shadows – like theatrical characters – are left uncast; nothing to show from this 'new occasion [...] [this] new term of relation' but the unbuttoned boots and the body bending, time's parabola extending.

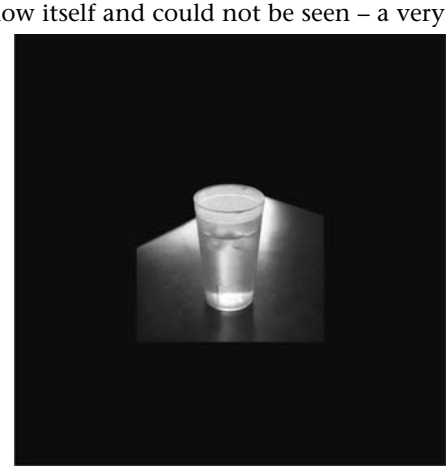


Of the morbid phenomenon of the body, seen necromantically now as theatre, there remains the remains of the living and loved body dead and dying in front of our eyes, offering as it does a form of posthumous (or is it a prosthetic?) perception of what Blau describes as the 'long initiation in the mystery of its vanishings'.[6] But now, neither blaming the boots, nor faulting the feet, what is finally encountered, performing right there in front of us, is the mortal, physical fact of this particular body that matters so much, the singularity of its vanishing presence seen feelingly, fleetingly. 'There's a man all over for you' (*G*, p.4): Marcel sitting alone, despairing at the edge of his bed, 'trying to master [his] pain' (*RTP*, II, p.783); Estragon exhausted, frustrated, holding his empty boot, 'air[ing] it a bit' (*G*, p.4), his foot now 'swelling visibly' (*G*, p.6). Stopping there, at that stilled site, that stalled image, at that very precise picture of pain, showing what refuses to show, and where, 'just when you think you've brought it into focus, it disappears' (*SHF*, p.153).

For it is upon those bending bodies, those removed boots, found in both Proust and Beckett, in those two specific images of briefly focused thought, that thought itself violently arises, and where – as Deleuze describes it in his book on Proust – 'time itself [...] becomes sensuous', and where, 'hidden by the [...] sensation', 'nothingness dawns'.[7] Or, borrowing from the vivid language of astrophysics and black holes, seeing such stilled boots and bodies before us, it is *there* at the 'event horizon' of the corporeal gesture, at 'time's dilation', the slowing of the flow of time – and beyond which, as if passing through a black hole, *nothing* emerges – that vision itself becomes occluded by the stretching and straining of sight towards its own tethered limit. '*Staring sightlessly*', the

spectator abruptly encounters – as if blind-sided by the very sight of 'it all [...] it all [...] it all'[8] – a kind of after-image of absence imprinted like an undeveloped, *undevelopable* photographic negative onto the delicate cornea of the eye.

Proust's narrator, alone in his empty hotel room, had removed his boots, and in the removal revealed the movement of an appearance, the phantasmatic presence of his grandmother returning – 'the living reality in a complete and involuntary recollection' (*RTP*, II, p.783). But returned, she was to confirm to her grandson – at long last and unexpectedly – the irreversible permanence of her death, indeed, returned to represent death, returning to die again, or rather, to finally, fully, die one year after the fact. While Beckett's Estragon was to remove *his* boots, and in the removal reveal – unlike Proust – the movement of a *dis*appearance, an absence, 'nothing to show' (*G*, p.4), nothing to see, a nothing *not* to be represented. And yet, what *was* revealed in the very straining, tearing, panting effort of it all, in the morbid theatre of the body – taking us to the dilating horizon of *this* event – was something of Estragon's very desire to see what would not show itself and could not be seen – a very precise picture of *that*.



Held still at this site of time – at the very sight of time – the 'cruel precisions' of Beckett's earlier described camera are no longer offering up a printable picture, a representable return of things past, what Beckett was to characterize as a 'contradiction between presence and irremediable obliteration' that he found 'intolerable' (*P*, p.42). Instead, what *is* offered, and what faintly and

tolerably remains for Beckett, is a performable, temporal image that coalesces upon a pair of battered boots and a still poignant gesture 'alive and tender' (*G*, p.42). Stalled, but not entirely stopped, as if seen in slow-motion – as if 'swelling visibly' – these moving images movingly dissolve at the precise point of perceptual contact. Recalling what he later spoke of as a 'pain [that] could only be focused at a distance' (*P*, p.45), Beckett's now distanced stage is presented like the drawing room of Proust's grandmother, drawing us in to this delineated image quietly collapsing in upon itself, and upon us. Beckett writes elsewhere that 'to restore silence is the role of objects'.[9] And for Proust and Beckett, it is *these* objects, the boots of both, that have finally functioned as the silencing props of their respective performances, the well-worn boots from which each would differently locate the loss, sound out the situated silences, and measure the painful movements of their own dispersion and disappearance.

Notes

* Photographs by Steven Foster.

1. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (New York: Grove Press, 1954), p.2. Hereafter referred to as *G*.
2. Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, tr. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, 3 vols (New York: Random House, 1981), I, p.719. Hereafter referred to as *RTP*.
3. Samuel Beckett, *Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: John Calder, 1965). Hereafter referred to as *P*.
4. Herbert Blau, *Sails of the Herring Fleet: Essays on Beckett* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p.153. Hereafter referred to as *SHF*.
5. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Trying to Understand *Endgame*', in *Samuel Beckett's Endgame*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), p.33.
6. Herbert Blau, *Take Up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p.299.
7. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, tr. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) p.20.
8. Samuel Beckett, *Footfalls*, in *Collected Shorter Plays* (New York: Grove, 1984) p.240.
9. Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*, in *Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (New York: Knopf, 1997), p.10.

10

Models of Musical Communication in Proust and Beckett

Franz Michael Maier

One day in 1983, Nicholas Zurbrugg (1947–2001), professor of comparative literature, sits at his desk working on his article on 'Beckett, Proust and "Dream of Fair to Middling Women" '.[1] Again he reads the sentences of Beckett's monograph *Proust* that have perplexed him so many times before. Yet again he shakes his head at the strong language of Beckett's aestheticist plea for the social indifference of the artist: 'Proust is completely detached from all moral considerations. There is no right and wrong in Proust nor in his world. (Except possibly in those passages dealing with the war, when for a space he ceases to be an artist and raises his voice with the plebs, mob, rabble, canaille)'.[2] Zurbrugg browses through the series of apodictic statements on the solitude of the artist: 'Art is the apotheosis of solitude'; 'Friendship [...] has no spiritual significance'; 'There is no communication, because there are no vehicles of communication'; 'There are no [...] faithful hounds in Proust'; 'We are alone' (*P*, pp.64; 63–4; 64; 89; 66). Finally Zurbrugg stares meditatively at Beckett's praise of music as the art of arts: 'A book could be written on the significance of music in the work of Proust' (*P*, p.91).

Professor Zurbrugg has read enough. In a strong emotional reaction he puts down a decidedly contradictory statement: 'A book could be written on the function of moral decisions and the function of the will in *A la recherche du temps perdu*' (*BP*, p.59). Actually, Zurbrugg did not wait for someone else to write this book. In his *Beckett and Proust* of 1988,[3] he constructs a sharp difference between Proust who unfolds a vast and richly differentiated cosmos of human activities, and Beckett, who, like a merciless angel of judgment, separates the benedict realm of art from the maledict rest of Proust's book.

Of course, Proust's description of Brichot's war propaganda and of Charlus' pity for the dying enemy soldiers is not the voice of the rabble,

but a moving documentation of Proust's independent insight into the political situation at the time of the war. The impact of 'moral decisions' on the narrator's line of thought cannot be denied. All the same, it is not easy to decide whether Beckett or Zurbrugg is right in his interpretation of Proust. Edith Fournier, in her French translation of Beckett's *Proust*, has given the loci on which Beckett's aestheticist statements are grounded.[4] Beckett is not misquoting Proust. Rather, he is trying to give unambiguous definitions where Proust raises questions. Proust's narrator is writing in Time (that is, not beyond Time) and speaks about contradicting experiences that lead to different conclusions. Even his most apodictic statements do have their time and their situation. They may be subject to revision. In many questions, a pluralality of hypotheses is present in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, while no decision is taken; in one case, the contradiction is even described as a 'bizarre coïncidence'.[5] Beckett himself had given a concise description of this multidimensionality in Proust in the very first sentence of his monograph: 'The Proustian equation is never simple' (*P*, p.11). In what followed, he reduced this multidimensionality into a binary opposition of art versus social life, because he wanted to transform the concept of the substantiality of art from a mere hypothesis into a fact.

What does this mean regarding the relation of art and social life? Vis-à-vis an ambivalent situation in Proust, Beckett follows the old-fashioned style of Aristotelian logic and organises the situation into *opposita contraria*. He argues in favour of the solitude of the artist and rejects the 'Nietzschean conception that friendship must be based on intellectual sympathy' (*P*, p.65).

The name of the classical philologist Friedrich Nietzsche leads us to the Greek formulation of the opposition in question. Dealing with the problem of how to live a happy life, the Greek philosophers wondered whether it were preferable to live in a state of self-sufficiency, of *autarkeia*, or to open oneself towards forms of friendship, or *philia*. Aristotle discusses the question in the ninth chapter of the ninth book of his *Ethica Nicomachea*: 'It is also disputed whether the happy man will need friends or not. It is said that those who are supremely happy and self-sufficient have no need of friends [...]. But it seems strange, when one assigns all good things to the happy man, not to assign friends, who are thought the greatest of external goods'.[6]

As we see, the ideal of *autarkeia* and the ideal of friendship form a dilemma. On the one hand there is autarky, which may be conceived as a sort of god-likeness. The Greek god has no need of anyone, nor does he corrupt his thought by referring to anything inferior in dignity

to himself. In regard to their art, the artists in Proust resemble autarkic subjects of this kind: it is because of their god-likeness that the narrator discusses whether the deceased artists Bergotte and Vinteuil are really forever dead.[7]

On the other hand there is friendship. If we follow Beckett's quotations from Proust, friendship is nothing but a hindrance to the creative artist. Had Vinteuil not taken care of his daughter, but taken her to an orphanage (as Rousseau did), he would have been able to accomplish the composition of his septet (as Rousseau had been able to accomplish his book on education, *Émile*). Had the narrator not been disturbed by Saint-Loup, he would have found his way to writing much earlier. It is true that the narrator has to follow his own path, where neither Saint-Loup, nor Albertine, nor Madame Swann can accompany him. In this sense, friendship has no intellectual significance.

However, why did Beckett not define art as the apotheosis of autarky, as would have been the consequence of his rejection of Nietzsche's praise of friendship? Why did he choose the definition 'Art is the apotheosis of solitude' that is ambivalent in itself? It begins enthusiastically with the motif of apotheosis, that is, of becoming a god-like being. But it does not maintain this enthusiasm. Compared to the proud word *autarkeia*, 'solitude' sounds desperate. Beckett, it seems, is well aware that in Proust's novel there is no clear-cut border between the world of art and the world of life. He chooses to interpret this in the sense of a pessimist view of the social situation of the artist.

Beckett does not give the word apotheosis its full positive meaning.[8] Accordingly, he does not do justice to an episode in Proust in which a work of art, a musical composition, brings to reality a very peculiar combination of *autarkeia* and redemption from solitude. This music is played at the soirée Saint-Euverte. Monsieur Swann attends this soirée because he hopes by some diversion to rid himself of his painful thoughts about Odette. When he becomes aware that the sonata by Vinteuil will be played, he first tries to escape this music that will remind him of Odette. But then he listens and all of a sudden understands the music:

> Le beau dialogue que Swann entendit entre le piano et le violon au commencement du dernier morceau! [...] D'abord le piano solitaire se plaignit, comme un oiseau abandonné de sa compagne; le violon l'entendit, lui répondit comme d'un arbre voisin. C'était comme au commencement du monde, comme s'il n'y avait encore eu qu'eux deux sur la terre, ou plutôt dans ce monde fermé à tout le reste.[9]

> [The beautiful dialogue which Swann heard between the piano and the violin at the beginning of the last passage! First the solitary piano lamented, like a bird abandoned by its mate; the violin heard it, answered it as from a neighbouring tree. It was as at the beginning of the world, as if there were only the two of them still on the earth, or rather in this world closed to all the rest].[10]

We know from Proust's correspondence that this situation is inspired by the fourth movement of César Franck's sonata in A major.[11]

Example 1: César Franck, Violin sonata A-major (1886), fourth movement, first bars (Figure 10.1)

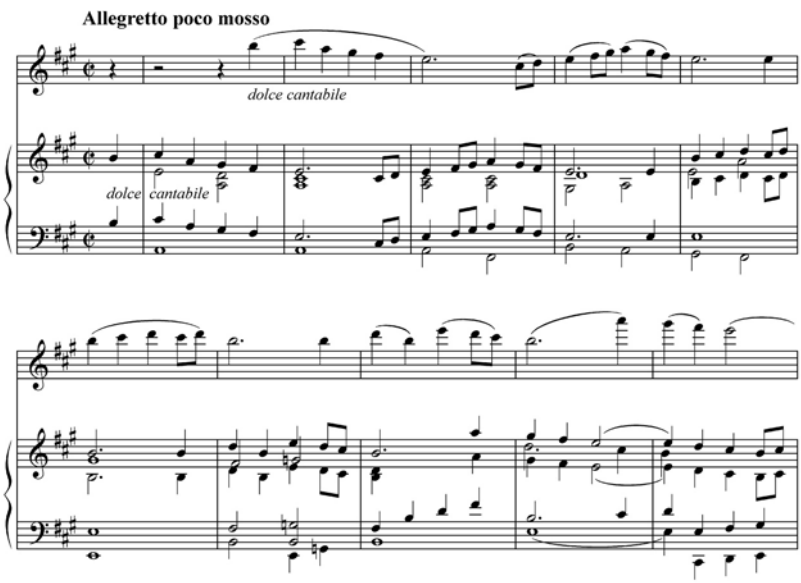


Figure 10.1

We see how the piano begins and the violin follows. The theory of musical composition calls this a canon all'ottava: the melody of the violin (in a certain distance of beats) follows the melody of the piano in the interval of an octave. According to Proust's description, this setting carefully merges the ideal of friendship and the ideal of *autarkeia*. The two melodic lines are engaged in a harmonious dialogue – one that has nothing to do with the world outside. Contemplating this ideal dialogue, Swann becomes aware of the distance that separates him from Odette: 'À partir de cette soirée, Swann comprit que le sentiment qu'Odette avait eu pour lui ne renaîtrait jamais, que ses espérances de bonheur ne se

réaliseraient plus' (*DCCS*, p.347) [From this evening on, Swann realized that the feeling Odette had had for him would never return, that his hopes of happiness would never be realized now (*TWS*, p.355)].

Even if this music represents art as the apotheosis of autarky, Beckett is right: art and life are strictly separated from one another. It may be that one can interpret a musical canon as an artistic metaphor for friendship – in the social world friendship does not exist. Social and love relations are vain and dishonest: Odette leaves Swann to travel with Forcheville. The old Swann who has finally married Odette does not remember the canon in Vinteuil's sonata.

As suggested earlier, Proust is never one-dimensional. A second couple provides a different account of the dilemma of *autarkeia* and friendship: this is Vinteuil and the friend of his daughter. Vinteuil has decided to sacrifice the completion of his magnum opus in order to take care of his daughter. This decision is rewarded by the efforts of the friend of Mademoiselle Vinteuil who, after Vinteuil's death, finishes his work: she reconstructs the septet from his sketches. This reconstruction, which could only be accomplished on the basis of an intimate knowledge of the work of the composer, reminds us of the fact that Aristotle, in his *Ethica Nicomachea*, calls the friend 'another self' (*NE*, p.241).

Still another couple exemplifies a relationship pointedly contradictory to Beckett's assumption that art is the apotheosis of solitude. This is the relationship between the narrator and his grandmother. During their visit to Balbec she takes care of her grandson. This is a most intimate and trustful relationship. The Aristotelian formulation of the friend as another self is explicitly present in its description: 'Et mes pensées se prolongeaient en elle sans subir de déviation parce qu'elles passaient de mon esprit dans le sien sans changer de milieu, de personne.'[12] [And my thoughts became hers without alteration, passing from my mind to hers without changing medium or person].[13]

When remembering this situation on a later occasion, the narrator calls his grandmother 'me and more than me':

> L'être qui venait à mon secours, qui me sauvait de la sécheresse de l'âme, c'était celui qui, plusieurs années auparavant, dans un moment de détresse et de solitude identiques, dans un moment où je n'avais plus rien de moi, était entré, et qui m'avait rendu à moi-même, car il était moi et plus que moi (le contenant qui est plus que le contenu et me l'apportait).[14]
>
> [The person who had come to my assistance, who was rescuing me from my aridity of soul, was the one who, several years before, at

> an identical moment of distress and loneliness, a moment when I no longer had anything of myself, had entered, and who had restored me to myself, for it was both me and more than me (the container which is more than the content, and had brought it to me).][15]

The relationship between the narrator and his grandmother does have intellectual significance. Of its several aspects only the aspect of musical communication will be discussed here. The narrator feels alone in his hotel room, frightened by the new situation. His grandmother whose room is only separated from his by a thin wall, proposes a system of signs to communicate through the wall: if he is in need of something he will knock at the wall and she will answer by knocking back and looking after him. This has nothing to do with *autarkeia*, but much to do with friendship and with the art of music. Music is an art, but music is not the apotheosis of solitude. The wall is described by its 'diaphanéité musicale' (*SG*, p.502) [musical diaphaneity (*SAG*, p.510)]; it is said to behave like a musical instrument, conveying the compassionate answer of the grandmother to the anxious question of the narrator 'comme la réplique d'un second instrument' (*SG*, p.159) [like a second instrument (*SAG*, p.164)].

It is the context of Proust's novel that allows us to interpret a sequence of three and three knocks against a wall as music. There are three steps: the canon of violin and piano is an example of musical communication depicted within an artificial musical composition. The interaction of grandmother and grandson is an example of communication that is musical in the sense of a friendly and comforting social communication. The narrator's experience with his grandmother adds human reality to Swann's account of dialogue in Vinteuil's sonata for violin and piano. This experience shows its meaning in the third step: the narrator conceives Vinteuil's art to be based on the communication between the empirical composer and his transcendental self, his 'patrie perdue' (*LP*, p.761) [lost homeland (*TPS*, p.236)]. He listens to Vinteuil's septet and feels so close to this composer that he even thinks about Vinteuil's spiritual presence. In this situation the experience of musical communication through the wall comes to his mind. It gives credibility to these theoretical, even speculative reflections. In Proust's novel, models of communication, of dialogues, connect the worlds of life and art.

The young Beckett played down these episodes. They did not fit into his pessimist reading of Proust. However, Beckett's thinking about Proust is not limited to the picture the young Beckett gave. There is much Proust in Beckett. Moreover, there are many forms of dialogue in the work of Beckett, some musical. The song 'Death and the Maiden', which becomes

faintly audible in Beckett's radio drama *All That Fall*, is the dialogue between Death and the maiden. The *Merry Widow* waltz duet in *Happy Days* is the dialogue between Sonia and Danilo. *Nacht und Träume*, not metaphorically but very literally, is a dialogue between the dreamers and the dreams to which they listen.

One day in early 1987 Nicholas Zurbrugg (1947–2001), professor of comparative literature, sits at his desk, working on his book on Beckett and Proust. Once again he reads the sentences of Beckett's text *Worstward Ho* that puzzle him, as their description of 'held holding hands'[16] does not fit in with the 250 pages he has already written. Once again he tries to imagine the scenery of the television play *Nacht und Träume* with its 'carefully crafted images of affection, grace, and harmony'.[17] This time Zurbrugg does not confine himself to merely writing a contradicting statement. He books a flight to Paris. Nothing short of a meeting with Beckett would resolve his quandary. From a footnote in Zurbrugg's book we learn the outcome of this meeting: the necessity for a contradictory statement no longer exists. The footnote reads: 'Samuel Beckett made reference to the workings of the "compassionate hand" in *Nacht und Träume* in conversation with Nicholas Zurbrugg, Paris, 17 January 1987'.[18]

Notes

1. Nicholas Zurbrugg, 'Beckett, Proust and "Dream of Fair to Middling Women" ', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, No.9 (1984), pp.43–64. Hereafter referred to as *BP*.
2. Samuel Beckett, *Proust, and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: John Calder, 1965), pp.66–67. Hereafter referred to as *P*.
3. Nicholas Zurbrugg, *Beckett and Proust* (Gerrard's Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988). Hereafter referred to as *BAP*.
4. See, for instance, footnotes 91, 94 and 95 in Samuel Beckett, *Proust*, tr. Édith Fournier (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1990), pp.77 and 78.
5. Marcel Proust, *Le Temps retrouvé*, in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. J.-Y. Tadié, 4 vols, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1987–89), IV, p.614. The volume is hereafter referred to as *LTR* and the full novel as *RTP*. See also Marcel Proust, *La Prisonnière*, in *RTP*, Vol. III. Hereafter referred to as *LP*. For the English translation, see *The Prisoner*, tr. Carol Clark, in Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, ed. C. Prendergast, Vol. 5 (London: Penguin, 2002). The volume is hereafter referred to as *TPS* and the full novel as *SLT*: 'cette hypothèse où l'art serait réel' (p.876) [the hypothesis that art might be real (p.346)]; 'l'hypothèse matérialiste, celle du néant' (p.883) ['the other hypothesis, the materialist one, that of nothingness' (p.352)].
6. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, IX, 9, tr. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.238. Hereafter referred to as *NE*.

7. See *LP*, pp. 693 and 759.
8. Gilles Deleuze gives an impressive description of artistic apotheosis: 'La musique arrive à transformer la mort de telle jeune fille en *une jeune fille meurt'* [Music manages to transform the death of some young girl into *a young girl dies*; tr. ed.], *L'Épuisé*, in Samuel Beckett, *Quad et autres pièces pour la télévision* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1992), p.103 [Deleuze's italics].
9. Marcel Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, in *RTP*, I, pp.345–46. Hereafter referred to as *DCCS*.
10. Marcel Proust, *The Way by Swann's*, tr. Lydia Davis, in *SLT*, I, pp. 353–4. Hereafter referred to as *TWS*.
11. See Marcel Proust, Letter to Antoine Bibesco, 19 April 1913, in Proust, *Correspondance*, ed. Philip Kolb, Vol. XII (Paris: Plon, 1984), pp.147–8.
12. Marcel Proust, *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, in *RTP*, II, p.28.
13. Marcel Proust, *In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*, tr. James Grieve, in *SLT*, II, p.246.
14. Marcel Proust, *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, in *RTP*, III, p.153. Hereafter referred to as *SG*.
15. Marcel Proust, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, tr. John Sturrock, in *SLT*, IV, p.158. Hereafter referred to as *SAG*.
16. Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho*, in *Nohow On* (London: John Calder, 1992), pp.99–128 [p.105].
17. Nicholas Zurbrugg, 'Seven Types of Postmodernity: Several Types of Samuel Beckett', in Joseph H. Smith (ed.), *The World of Samuel Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p.45.
18. See *BAP*, p.303, fn. 19.

11

The Long and the Short of it... Moving Images in Proust and Beckett

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Gilles Deleuze's career as a philosopher and critical theorist held important implications for literary and cinematographic analysis. In particular, Deleuze's notion of *heccéités* [*haecceities*],[1] or the 'thisness' at the heart of singularities, offers a tantalizing approach to understanding the unique rhythms and affective intensities in the writings of Marcel Proust and Samuel Beckett. The Duns Scotian concept of haecceity recurs throughout Deleuze's work, notably in his *Dialogues* with Claire Parnet, but also in *Mille Plateaux*, written with Félix Guattari.[2] For Deleuze, the term designates sites of 'intensities' and dynamic connections in texts that precede, or limn, any notion of an individual or personal subject. They point instead to relational movements seen as the impersonal *event* of writing, of writing's drive towards making meanings. If you will, *sens* (meaning) is conflated with *sens* (movement, direction, as in *sens de la visite*) in Deleuze's use of this term. Such kinetic force fields in the text carry or bear its affective elements through their cinematic-like assemblages: 'Les heccéités sont seulement des degrés de puissance qui se composent, auxquels correspondent un pouvoir d'affecter et d'être affecté, des affects actifs ou passifs, des intensités [...] des *rapports cinématiques* qui constituent des agencements collectifs [faits] de compositions de vitesse' (*D*, pp.111–13; my emphasis) [Haecceities are merely degrees of force that gather together and to which a power to affect or to be affected corresponds: active or passive affects, intensities, *cinematic relationships* which constitute collective arrangements made up of formations of speed].

A brief summary of Deleuze's distinction between concepts, affects, and percepts helps to unpack his notion of singularities. For Deleuze, philosophers work with concepts to organize logically and rationally our experiences. Artists, on the other hand, challenge us to see – with an eye that we do not have –, to feel, to break through habit, and to interrupt

synthesis and order, as Claire Colebrook has so clearly explained in her overview of Deleuze's thought.[3] In addressing affects and percepts, the artist is in a position to place us – the reader/viewer/listener – in a relationship of Bergsonian-like co-creativity. Affects are what happen to us in moments of intensity, as, for example, in the light that makes our eyes flinch or the sudden epiphany of a new realization; they are qualities that are brought to light in the becoming of characters. In *L'Image-mouvement* [*Image-movement*], Deleuze shows how the affective qualities of Dreyer's film *Joan of Arc* arise from the camera close-ups of Joan's face, portraying not an individual, but rather the pure affects of terror and fear divorced from the person.[4] Similarly, percepts denote the becoming of perceptions. They are the textual elements that allow us to focus not on *what* characters see, but rather on *seeing*.

Haecceities, in Deleuze's interpretation, are assemblages of singular affects and percepts that underscore writing as textuality which privileges difference, process, disorder, disruption, and flow. In *Dialogues*, Deleuze refers to these textual singularities in a Proust-like formulation: 'Une heure, un jour, une saison, un climat, une ou plusieurs années – un degré de chaleur, une intensité, des intensités très différentes qui se composent – ont une individualité parfaite qui ne se confond pas avec celle d'une chose ou d'un sujet formés' (*D*, p.111) [An hour, a day, a season, an atmosphere, a single year or several years – a degree of heat, an intensity, a range of very different intensities that gather together – have a perfect individuality which is not to be confused with the individuality of an already-formed thing or subject]. In Proust's view of poetic reality, of course, 'Une heure n'est pas qu'une heure, c'est un vase rempli de parfums, de sons, de projets et de climats' ['An hour is not just an hour, it is a vessel full of perfumes, sounds, plans and atmospheres'].[5] For both Proust and Deleuze, the real is the relationship – intricate and complex – between sensations and memories that, though personal or subjective, escape fixture in time, space, or individual subjectivity. Such sensations and memories are simply (or rather not so simply) brought to life by the multiple points of view that exist in the work of art: 'Ce que nous appelons la réalité est un certain rapport entre ces sensations et ces souvenirs qui nous entourent simultanément – rapport que supprime une simple vision cinématographique, [. . .] – *rapport unique que l'écrivain doit retrouver pour en enchaîner à jamais dans sa phrase les deux termes différents*' (*RTP*, IV, p.468; my emphasis) ['What we call reality is a certain relationship between these sensations and the memories which surround us simultaneously – a relationship which is suppressed in a simple cinematographic vision, [. . .] – *a unique relationship which the writer has*

to rediscover in order to bring its two different terms together permanently in a sentence' (*SLT*, VI, pp.197–8)]. Like Proust's 'Combray' that never existed *except* in the work of art, or the function of the 'nom propre' [proper name] that designates not a person or a family but an aura of beliefs, emotions, and perceptions surrounding it, haecceities mark becomings and process as events. For Deleuze, 'les noms propres [...] ne désignent pas des personnes mais marquent les événements, [...] qui ne sont pas indifférenciés mais constituent des devenirs ou des processus' (*D*, p.111) [proper names do not designate individuals but mark events, [...] which are not undifferentiated but constitute becomings and processes].

In the Deleuzian notion of text, then, the metaphor for Proust's novel is not a completed cathedral or a finished Fortuny gown, but rather the 'seams' ('couture') and the 'seems' (appearances or possibilities) of potential or virtual fashionings that the text performs.[6] If style is metaphor, metaphor is essentially metamorphic, Deleuze tells us in *Proust et les signes*,[7] and multiplicities of singularities (or *heccéités* [*haecceities*]) co-exist in a whole without any unity or totality other than the unifying potential of a performative reading: 'prétendre que Proust avait l'idée de l'unité préalable de *la Recherche* ou qu'il l'a trouvée après, c'est le lire d'un mauvais oeil' (*PS*, p.140) [to claim that Proust had the pre-existing unity of the *Recherche* in his mind, or that he discovered it afterwards, is to read him incorrectly]. Deleuze's logic, as has been pointed out by several of his critics, is one of multiplicities, where the literary work is the sum of its parts though it does not unify them. In *Proust et les signes*, he reads the Proustian text as a rejection of organic unities and an embracing of a unity of diversities. Haecceities – these singular forces of the text – are sheathed by the formal aspects of a text, according to Deleuze, but the very text is seen as a site of difference where difference is understood as a principle of immanence, as a non-specific point of view (the portrayal of 'seeing' rather than 'I see').[8]

Functioning as a kind of mobile *punctum*, to use Barthes's notion in *La Chambre Claire*,[9] these *heccéités* [*haecceities*] or singularities that convey style, or points of view, are also compared to the inscription of a foreign language within language. In *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, Proust asserted that: 'Les beaux livres sont écrits dans une sorte de langue étrangère' [Beautiful books are written in a sort of foreign language], a statement quoted by Deleuze to bolster his own claim that: 'Un style, c'est arriver à bégayer dans sa propre langue. Etre comme un étranger dans sa propre langue. Faire une ligne de fuite' (*D*, p.10) [Style is managing to stutter in one's own language. It is being like a foreigner in one's own language; creating a line of flight]. Style as stammering, or, as Deleuze puts it, boring holes

into language, is also associated by Deleuze with Beckett, the Anglo-Irish writer traversing French *and* English, as well as Kafka, the Czech Jew writing in German, among others.[10] Considered as eruption of the other within the same, style is the formal envelope or sheath for the relationships of motion and emotion (desire) that are conserved in writing as the immanence of difference: 'L'essentiel, c'est la différence intériorisée, devenue immanente' (*PS*, p.75) [What is essential is difference internalized, rendered immanent].

Style as the stuttering of a foreign language within language is, of course, an auditory phenomenon, but style is also considered in visual and cinematic terms in Deleuze's view. From *Proust et les signes* on, Deleuze delineates writing in terms of signifying systems and lines of movement that are *variable* within a distinct body of work ('la manière dont tous ces régimes de signes filent suivant une ligne de pente, variable avec chaque auteur' [*PS*, p.145] [the way in which all of these regimes of signs follow a particular gradient which varies with each author]). Such a kinetic, architectonic view of textuality leads him to compare Virginia Woolf's style to the dynamic image of a 'wave', and Proust's pattern in the *Recherche* to the rhizomatic spread and flow of a 'toile d'araignée' (*PS*, p.218) [spider's web]. Kafka's critique of the law and bureaucratic impersonality is dubbed the 'K' function in *Dialogues* (*D*, p.145), while, in *L'Epuisé* [*The Exhausted*], Deleuze likens Beckett's style to the exhaustion of serial permutations.[11]

This variability in relationships of affects and percepts is 'cinematic' for Deleuze whose notions of *image-mouvement* [*image-movement*] and *image-temps* [*image-time*] stem from the mode of expression made possible by the invention of the movie camera, that is, the ability to present the pure movement of images through time, divorced from a fixed point of view. This machine-like quality of cinematic language[12] – the camera as mobile eye – is productive of affects and percepts that are non-subjectified and exist in a state of virtual composition. How do these moments of textual intensities, or 'assemblages of non-subjectified affects and percepts that enter into virtual composition', play out in Beckett and Proust?[13]

The title of my essay – 'The Long and the Short of it... Moving Images in Proust and Beckett' – plays not only with the notion of 'it' as the impersonal drive of writing – its assemblages of haecceities or singularities of intensities, affects, and percepts –, but also with the ambiguity of the active and passive meanings of the word 'moving' which functions as both adjective and gerund. In works by both authors, images move and move us. In addition to writing kinetic and affective qualities of visual – and auditory – images into their texts, Proust and Beckett 'move'

images through their works in rhythms of repetition and difference (what Deleuze calls mapping 'la carte des vitesses et des intensités' [*D*, p.112] [the map of speeds and intensities]). These *heccéités* determine style as rhythm, cadence, motion and emotion in 'intensities' or blocks of becomings of affects and percepts. They manifest themselves in multifarious ways, for example, as the blur or demarcation of point of view; the staccato, rubato, or silences of a text's musical effects; its rhythms of speed, pause or stop; the stammering and stuttering of a textual language at odds with itself (Deleuze's concept of a minor, or foreign, language); or the expansion and dwindling, amplification and diminution characteristic, respectively, of Proust's and Beckett's prose, ironically referenced in my title as the 'long and the short of it'.

Proust, of course, occupies the 'long', and Beckett the 'short', of 'it'. The Proustian textual machine proceeds by associative amplifications whose process Deleuze compares to the spinning of a spider's web of semiotic signifying systems that moves towards a vanishing point or 'ligne de fuite' [line of flight], a textual moment where the cinematic or kinetic relationship between two terms is underscored ('rapport unique que l'écrivain doit retrouver pour en enchaîner à jamais dans sa phrase les deux termes différents' [a unique relationship which the writer has to rediscover in order to bring its two different terms together permanently in a sentence] *RTP*, iv, p.468). Beckett's textual machine, on the other hand, advances by exhausting possibilities in a paradoxical emptying-out point or 'ligne de fuite' [lines of flight] where identity and difference coalesce, such that mobility collapses into immobility, speech into silence, man into machine. Proust's *Recherche* foregrounds the multiplicity of virtualities in expansion, whereas Beckett's works tend to privilege the minimalism of language and physicality reduced to discordant jolt, stuttering, stammering and on-stage stumbling. One thinks of the oft-quoted lines from *L'Innommable*: 'il faut continuer, je ne peux pas continuer, je vais continuer' ['you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on'].[14] Both authors pursue the limits and borders of language: for Proust, through the associative connecting points in texts which enter into expansive relationships with other points, changing nature, transforming themselves, and following a line of flight; for Beckett, through the minimalization of movement and speech where characters seek to exhaust themselves through series and permutations of disjunctions.[15]

In Proust's *Recherche*, references to kinetic images include the obvious (pre-) cinematographic representations such as the magic lantern and the *kinétoscope,* and the less obvious visual slippages between image and reality (confusion of images by Giotto, Gozzolo, Botticelli, for,

respectively, Françoise, the narrator's father, and Odette) in metaphoric and metonymic superimpositions of art on life. In addition, one finds in Proustian prose ekphrastic melding of written text and painted image (as in the description of Elstir's seascape in *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* [*Within a Budding Grove*]), as well as representations of perceptual fields in motion, among many other kinds of visual encoding in the *Recherche*. Deleuze comments on the 'blur' and 'swirl' of the perception of Albertine through 'la bande des jeunes filles en fleurs' [the gang of young girls in flower], and such a band of moving images recalls visually the celluloid strip of film. Style *is* vision, and vision *is* movement in Proust, whose writing Deleuze characterizes as a 'procédé idéo-grammatique' (*PS*, p.200) [an ideogrammatic process], where the convergence of multiple points of view, constellations of affects and percepts, and zones of indistinctions coalesce into a superior Point of view, allowing us to see 'seeing'.[16] For Deleuze, 'l'essence selon Proust, [...] n'est pas quelque chose de vu, mais une sorte de *point de vue* supérieur' (*PS*, p.133) [Essence, according to Proust, [...] is not something seen, but a sort of superior *point of view*]. Style, then, is the formal signifying structure of the work of art which emulates, or rather, *is* think*ing*, remember*ing*, see*ing* as the dynamic and kinetic individuations of creat*ing*, that is, the project*ing* of multiple, refracted points of view. Deleuze delineates the originality of Proustian involuntary memory as the following: 'elle va d'un état d'âme, et de ses chaînes associatives, à un point de vue créateur ou transcendant – et non plus, à la manière de Platon, d'un état du monde à des objectivités vues' (*PS*, p.134) [it proceeds from a mood [state of the soul], and from its associative links, to a creative or transcendent point of view – and no longer in the manner of Plato, from a state of the world to a perceived objectivity]. From affect and its associative chains, style in Proust carries us to an inevitable point of rupture, or vanishing point, where two differences, two terms or objects, are disjunctively united in the creative language of the artist, the *rapport unique* (*PS*, p.199) [*unique relationship*] of artistic creation. We can see that in Deleuzian thought, the movement of Proust's *roman fleuve* is fluvial:

> Le style aura à entraîner tout cela, comme un fleuve charriant les matériaux de son lit; mais l'essentiel n'est pas là. Il est quand la phrase atteint à un Point de vue propre à chacun des deux objets, mais précisément point de vue qu'on doit dire propre à l'objet parce que l'objet est déjà disloqué par lui, comme si le point de vue se divisait en mille points de vue divers incommunicants, si bien que, la même opération se faisant pour l'autre objet, les points de vue peuvent s'insérer

> les uns dans les autres, résonner les uns avec les autres, un peu comme la mer et la terre échangent leur point de vue dans les tableaux d'Elstir. Voilà 'l'effet' du style explicatif: deux objets étant donnés, *il produit des objets partiels* (il *les* produit comme objets partiels insérés l'un dans l'autre), *il produit des effets de résonance, il produit des mouvements forcés*. (*PS*, pp.199–200)
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> [Style will have to carry all of that along, like a river washing along all the materials on the riverbed; but the essential does not lie there. The essential is present when the sentence attains a point of view that is proper to each of the two objects, but precisely a point of view which must be called proper to the object because the object is already dislocated by it, as if the point of view were being divided into a thousand different points of view that are not in communication with one another, to such an extent that, when the same operation is carried out for the other object, the points of view can be inserted within one another, resonate with one another, a little like the sea and land exchange points of view in the paintings of Elstir. That is the 'effect' of explanatory style: given two objects, it produces partial objects (it produces *them* as partial objects inserted in one another), *it produces effects of resonance, it produces enforced movements*.]

Thus, for Deleuze, style in Proust is mobile. It swirls and blurs partial objects that are linked associatively so as to produce movement: 'Telle est l'image, le produit du style. Cette production à l'état pur, on la trouve dans l'art, peinture, littérature ou musique, surtout musique' (*PS*, p.200) [Such is the image, the product of style. This production in the pure state is found in art, painting, literature or music, especially music]. As an example of this cinematic architectonics of a superior Point of view, or style, Deleuze points to the emerging character of Albertine as she is gradually delineated from the group of young girls in *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* [*Within a Budding Grove*], and he asks rhetorically: 'Qu'est-ce qu'une jeune fille ou un groupe de jeunes filles? Proust les décrit comme des rapports mouvants de lenteur et de vitesse, et des individuations par heccéités non subjectives' (*D*, p.112) [What is a young girl or a group of young girls? Proust describes them in terms of moving relationships of slowness and speed, in terms of individuations through non-subjective haecceities]. In this iconic episode of the *Recherche*, the narrator finds himself abandoned by St Loup at Balbec and seeks idly to satisfy his thirst for feminine Beauty. This tormented, 'vacant', involuntary state of desire drives his perceptions which – over the ten pages of Pléiade-print text – are fragmented into non-individual 'percepts', or becomings

of perceptions, that are confused with others' 'percepts' – those of the young girls, of the hotel guests, of 'nous', the reader, of the 'femme du premier Président' (*RTP*, II, p.146) ['the wife of the First President' (*SLT*, II, p.369)], of seagulls in a bird's-eye camera view, and so forth. These percepts are strung together in cinematic constellations of moving images that are not unified by one particular point of view, but rather, to quote Proust's narrator: 'une divagation de regards aussi peu harmonieuses que la circonspecte titubation de leurs voisins' (*RTP*, II, p.147) ['wandering looks, all of which made them look just as uncoordinated as the others with their circumspect lurchings' (*SLT*, II, p.370)]. The emergence of Albertine from within these zones of indistinction, where fragments of living beings whirl around, takes place in a perceptual blur of variable cadences that speed up and slow down, dawdle and dwindle, through the associative chains and multiple forms of the textual imagery. That is, the approaching 'tache', or spot, is perceived by the narrator as a percept. Likened to a 'bande de mouettes' (*RTP*, II, p.146) ['gaggle of seagulls' (*SLT*, II, p.369)], the moving spot morphs into a 'bande de jeunes filles' ['gang of young girls'] seen as a jumble of limbs, eyes, noses, complexions, and successively refracted, through metaphoric associations, into colours, a Chopin phrase, a luminous comet, and tagged as 'voletant' ['flitting about'], 'tanguant' ['reeling'], 'en mouvement saccadé' ['moving jerkily'], and 'en titubation' ['tottering'] (*RTP*, II, pp.147–53; *SLT*, II, pp.370–5). The culmination of the perceptual sequence is a point of rupture or creative moment in the text where identity and difference are made to coalesce, such that, for example, seeing is equated with *not* seeing: 'Et cette absence, dans ma vision, des démarcations que j'établirais bientôt entre elles, propageait à travers leur groupe un flottement harmonieux, la translation continue d'une beauté fluide, collective et mobile' (*RTP*, II, p.148) ['The fact that my view of them was devoid of demarcations, which I was soon to draw among them, sent a ripple of harmonious imprecision through their group, the uninterrupted flow of a shared, unstable and elusive beauty' (*SLT*, II, p.371)]. Albertine *is* the sum of her affects. She *is* the disorganized unity of individuations or *heccéités* [*haecceities*]; she *is* colour, line, flow, movement, dispersal, fragmentation, and collective energy before being individualized as Albertine and then collapsing into the *bande de mouettes* ['gaggle of seagulls'] that both *is* and *is not* the *bande de jeunes filles* ['gang of young girls']. This textual vanishing point, or disjunctive unity, is literalized as a visual line of flight where difference and identity co-exist (self and other, mobility and immobility, speeding up and slowing down) in the *rapport unique* of the artist's associations: 'Mais si la promenade de la petite bande avait pour elle de

n'être qu'un extrait de la fuite innombrable des passants, laquelle m'avait toujours troublé, cette fuite était ici ramenée à un mouvement tellement lent qu'il se rapprochait de l'immobilité' (*RTP*, II, p.154) ['Though this little sauntering gang of young girls was an example of the countless occasions when young passers-by had escaped my grasp, a failure which had always irked me, this time the escapers had slowed their pace almost to the point of immobility' (*SLT*, II, p.377)]. Fragment, blur, speed and slow motion are brought to life by a mobile eye that represents seeing in a dynamic suspension or assemblage of points of view.

Likewise, in another iconic episode of the *Recherche*, the ekphrastic materialization (or performance) of Elstir's seascape as the multiform and intense unity of the poetic perceiving of nature, allows Proust's reader, like Elstir's viewer, to be drawn into the act of seeing. In effect, we *see* seeing that is divorced from a single point of view. The style, or superior Point of view, acts as an envelope for these becomings where the sea and the land exchange their points of view in the vanishing points of the text.[17]

True to the title, Beckett occupies the 'short of it'. If Proust proceeds by amplification and expansion to arrive at a vanishing point or 'ligne de fuite' [line of flight] where the disjunctive relationship between two terms is united in the creativity of the author's style ('rapport unique que l'écrivain doit retrouver pour en enchaîner à jamais dans sa phrase les deux termes différents' [a unique relationship which the writer has to rediscover in order to bring its two different terms together permanently in a sentence] *RTP*, iv, p.468), Beckett proceeds by exhausting possibilities such that speech collapses into silence.[18] Beckett's *La dernière bande*, translated from the English *Krapp's Last Tape* by the author, strikes me as a perfect – and brief – illustration of style as the exhaustion of language into stammering and stuttering.[19]

> Célébré la solennelle occasion, comme toutes ces dernières années, tranquillement à la Taverne. Personne. Resté assis devant le feu, les yeux fermés, à séparer le grain de la balle. Jeté quelques notes sur le dos d'une enveloppe. Heureux d'être de retour dans ma turne, dans mes vieilles nippes. Viens de manger, j'ai regret de le dire, trois bananes et ne me suis abstenu d'une quatrième qu'avec peine. Du poison pour un homme dans mon état. (Avec véhémence.) A éliminer! (Pause.) Le nouvel éclairage au-dessus de ma table est une grande amélioration. Avec toute cette obscurité autour de moi je me sens moins seul. (Pause.) En un sens. (Pause.) J'aime à me lever pour y aller faire un tour, puis revenir ici à... (il hésite)... moi. (Pause.) Krapp. (Pause).[20]

> [Celebrated the awful occasion, as in recent years, quietly at the Wine-house. Not a soul. Sat before the fire with closed eyes, separating the grain from the husks. Jotted down a few notes, on the back of an envelope. Happy to be back in my den, in my old rags. Have just eaten I regret to say three bananas and only with difficulty refrained from a fourth. Fatal things for a man with my condition. (Vehemently.) Cut 'em out! (Pause.) The new light above my table is a great improvement. With all this darkness round me I feel less alone. (Pause.) In a way. (Pause.) I love to get up and move about in it, then back here to . . . (hesitates). . . me. (Pause.) Krapp.]

In this play, the interaction of past and present, man (Krapp) and machine (Krapp on tape), consonants and words, fricatives and plosives, takes place in an ever diminishing exhaustion of possibilities where the breakdown of the human into the machine, indeed the humanization of the automaton, results in linguistic and gestural stuttering and stumbling as the only unity or continuity of the disunity.

As Deleuze's essay on Beckett's televisual plays, 'L'Epuisé' ['The Exhausted'], indicates, Beckett's characteristic style – his 'rapport unique' [unique relationship] of two different terms – aims to exhaust the whole of the possible. Deleuze delineates four possible types of exhaustion in Beckett's *oeuvre*: (1) forming exhaustive series of things; (2) drying up the flow of voices; (3) extenuating the potentialities of space; and (4) dissipating the power of the image (*ECC*, p.161). Kinetic imagery, especially in the plays and televisual writing, tends to concentrate on bodily gesture, gesticulation, and machine-like movements that are repeated in a discordant fashion. In *La dernière bande*, for instance, one of the characters is a machine, literally and figurally. There is less a narrator than a disembodied voice, less a hero than shifting relationships between past and present, recorded voice and spontaneous outburst, Krapp and tape-recorder (*PS*, p.217). In the disjointed and discordant jolt of voice and gait that peppers the play, auditively and visually, man and his language are atomized into an automaton stumbling on stage (Deleuze's 'body without organs') and an explosion or stammering of fricatives and plosives (the consonants that riddle the rhythm of the play). As Timothy Murphy has explained relative to Beckett's televisual writing, 'The result of this process of exhaustion is a theatre, a cinema, a television and finally a prose writing of pure intensities, of subjectivity and its component parts focused down to a timeless, dimension-less point, a singularity'.[21] What might that pure singularity be in *La dernière bande*? Language at odds with itself, and, in the French version especially, split

into fricatives and plosives – *bande, bobine, boîte, balle, boniche, brune* –, and, not coincidentally, into a stuttering of 'b's that interestingly single out the first letter of the *nom propre* [proper name] of the author. This brings us back then to Deleuze's notion of *heccéités* [*haecceities*] as 'les noms propres' (in this case atomized into consonants) 'qui ne désignent pas des personnes mais marquent les événements, [...] qui ne sont pas indifférenciés, mais constituent des devenirs ou des processus' (*D*, p.111) [proper names which do not designate individuals but mark events, [...] which are not undifferentiated but constitute becomings and processes].

Moving images, then, in Proust and Beckett, move and move us, the one by multiplicities of singularites, the other by the move to a pure singularity, thereby illustrating the long and the short of 'it'.

Appendix I

'The long...'

*Affects**/**percepts****/***lignes de fuite*** [***lines of flight***]*******

Parfois à ma fenêtre, dans l'hôtel de Balbec, le matin quand Françoise défaisait les couvertures qui cachaient la lumière, le soir quand j'attendais le moment de partir avec Saint-Loup, *il m'était arrivé*, *grâce à un effet de soleil**, **de prendre une partie plus sombre de la mer pour une côte éloignée****, ou de regarder *avec joie* **une zone bleue et fluide** *sans savoir* **si elle appartenait à la mer ou au ciel**. Bien vite mon intelligence rétablissait entre les éléments **la séparation que mon impression avait abolie.** C'est *ainsi qu'il m'arrivait à Paris dans ma chambre, d'entendre une dispute*, presqu'une émeute, **jusqu'à ce que j'eusse rapporté à sa cause, par exemple, une voiture** dont le roulement approchait, **ce bruit dont j'éliminais alors ces vociférations aiguës et discordantes que mon intelligence savait que des roues ne produisaient pas**. Mais les rares moments où **l'on voit la nature telle qu'elle est**, **poétiquement**, c'était de ceux-là *qu'était faite* l'oeuvre d'Elstir. Une de ses métaphores les plus fréquentes dans les marines qu'il avait près de lui en ce moment était justement celle qui, **comparant la terre à la mer, supprimait entre elles toute démarcation**. **C'était cette comparaison, tacitement et inlassablement répété dans une même toile, qui y introduisait cette multiforme et puissante unité, cause, parfois non clairement aperçue par eux,** *de l'enthousiasme qu'excitait – chez certains amateurs* **la peinture d'Elstir.** [...] il faut pourtant reconnaître que, dans la mesure où l'art met en lumière certaines lois, une fois qu'une industrie les a vulgarisées, l'art antérieur perd rétrospectivement un peu de son originalité. Depuis les débuts d'Elstir, nous avons connu ce qu'on appelle 'd'admirables'

photographies de paysages et de villes. Si on cherche à préciser ce que les amateurs désignent dans ce cas par cette épithète, on verra qu'elle s'applique d'ordinaire à quelque image singulière d'une chose connue, image différente de celles que nous avons l'habitude de voir, **singulière et pourtant vraie**, et qui à cause de cela est pour nous **doublement saisissante** parce **qu'elle nous étonne**, **nous fait sortir de nos habitudes, et tout à la fois nous fair rentrer en nous-même en nous rappelant** *une impression*. Par exemple, telle de ces photographies 'magnifiques' illustrera une loi de la perspective, nous montrera telle cathédrale que nous avons l'habitude de voir au milieu de la ville, **prise au contraire d'un point choisi d'où elle aura l'air trente fois plus hautes que les maisons** et **faisant éperon au bord du fleuve d'où elle est en réalité distante.** Or, l'effort d'Elstir de ne pas exposer les choses telles qu'il savait qu'elles étaient, mais **selon ces illusions optiques dont notre vision première est faite, l'avait précisément amené à mettre en lumière certaines de ces lois de perspective, plus frappantes alors, car l'art était le premier à les dévoiler**. [. . .] Un fleuve qui passe sous les ponts d'une ville était **pris d'un point de vue tel qu'il apparaissait entièrement disloqué, étalé ici en lac, aminci là en gilet, rompu ailleurs par l'interposition d'une colline couronnée de bois où le citadin va le soir respirer la fraîcheur du soir; et le rythme même de cette ville bouleversée n'était assuré que par la verticale inflexible des clochers qui ne montaient pas, mais plutôt, selon le fil à plomb de la pesanteur marquant la cadence comme dans une marche triomphale, semblaient tenir en suspens au-dessous d'eux toute la masse plus confuse des maisons étagéees dans la brume, le long du fleuve écrasé et décousu.** Et (comme les premières oeuvres d'Elstir dataient de l'époque où on agrémentait les paysages par la présence d'un personnage) sur la falaise ou dans la montagne, le chemin, cette partie à demi humaine de la nature, subissait, comme le fleuve ou l'océan, les éclipses de la perspective. Et soit qu'une arête montagneuse, ou la brune d'une cascade, où la mer empêchât de suivre la continuité de la route, visible pour le promeneur mais non pour nous, le petit personnage humain en habits démodés perdu dans ces solitudes semblait souvent arrêté devant un abîme, le sentier qu'il suivait finissant là, tandis que, trois cents mètres plus haut dans ces bois de sapins, c'est d'un oeil attendri et d'un coeur rassuré que nous voyions ***reparaître la mince blancheur de son sable hospitalier au pas du voyageur, mais dont le versant de la montagne nous avait dérobée, contournant la cascade ou le golfe, les lacets intermédiaires.*** [. . .] L'effort qu'Elstir faisait pour se dépouiller en présence de la réalité de toutes les notions de son intelligence était d'autant plus admirable ***que cet homme qui avant de peindre***

se faisait ignorant, oubliait tout par probité (car ce qu'on sait n'est pas à soi), avait justement une intelligence exceptionnellement cultivée. (*RTP*, *II*, pp.191–6).

[At the hotel in Balbec, there had been mornings when Françoise unpinned the blankets keeping out the light, or evenings when I was waiting for it to be time to go out with Saint-Loup, when *an effect of sunlight* at my bedroom window **had made me see a darker area of the sea as a distant coastline**, or filled me *with joy* at the sight of **a zone of liquid blue** which *it was impossible to say* **was either sea or sky**. The mind quickly redistributed the elements into **the categories which the impression had abolished.** *Similarly, in my room in Paris, I had heard sounds of squabbling,* almost rioting in the streets, **until I had linked them to their cause, for instance the rumbling approach of a dray, the sound of which, once identified, made me eliminate from it the high-pitched discordant shouting which my ear had really heard, but which my mind knew is not made by wheels**. Those infrequent moments **when we perceive nature as it is, poetically**, were what Elstir's work *was made of*. One of the metaphors which occurred most often in the sea-pictures which surrounded him then was **one which compares the land to the sea, blurring all distinction between them**. **And it was this comparison, tacitly, tirelessly repeated in a single canvas, imbuing it with its powerful and multifarious unity**, *which was the source of the enthusiasm felt*, **though sometimes they were not quite aware of this**, *by many lovers* **of Elstir's paintings**. [...] it must be recognized that, in so far as art establishes certain laws, and once an industry has vulgarized them, the art of earlier times loses in retrospect something of its originality. Since the earliest period of Elstir, we have seen supposedly admirable 'photographs' of landscapes and cities. If one tries to define what it is that art lovers mean by that adjective, it can generally be seen to apply to some unfamiliar image of a familiar thing, an image that is different from the ones we are in the habit of noticing, **unusual yet true**, and which for that reason seems **doubly striking**, since **it surprises us and shakes us out of our habits, while at the same time it turns us in on ourselves by recalling** *an impression*. For instance, one of these 'magnificent' photographs will illustrate a law of perspective by showing a cathedral which we are accustomed to seeing in the centre of the city, but **taken from a point of view so as to make it appear thirty times higher than the houses** and **jutting out beside the river, whereas it is nowhere near it**. The fact was that Elstir's intent, not to show things as he knew them to be, but **in accordance with the optical illusions that our first sight of things is made**

of, had led him to isolate some of these laws of perspective, which were more striking in his day, art having been first to uncover them. [. . .] A river flowing under the bridges of a city was **shown from a point of view that split it, spread it into a lake, narrowed it to a trickle, or blocked it by planting a hill in it, covered with woods, where the city-dwellers like to go for a breath of evening air; and the rhythm of the disrupted city was marked only by the inflexible verticality of the steeples, which did not climb skywards, but seemed rather, like gravity's plumb-line marking the beat in a triumphal march, to have the whole vague mass of houses hanging beneath them, ranged in misty tiers along the crushed and dismembered river**. Even that semi-human part of nature, a footpath along a cliff-top or on a mountain-side (Elstir's earliest works dating from the period when landscapes had to feature the presence of a character), was affected, like rivers or the ocean, by the eclipses of perspective. And whether a mountain ridge, a haze of spume rising from a waterfall, or the sea prevented one from seeing the road in its entirety, visible to the character but not to us, the little human figure in outdated clothes, lost among this wilderness, often seemed to have stopped in front of an abyss, the route he was following having come to an end; and then, three hundred yards higher up, among the pine-woods, we would be touched and reassured to see ***the reappearance of the thin white line of sandy path, friendly to the wanderer's tread, the intervening turns and twists of which, disappearing round the gulf or the waterfall, had been hidden from us by a mountainside***. [. . .] The effort made by Elstir, when seeing reality, to rid himself of all the ideas the mind contains, **to make himself ignorant so as to paint, to forget everything for the sake of his own integrity (since the things one know are not one's own), was especially admirable in a man whose own mind was exceptionally cultivated**. (*SLT*, II, pp.415–19)].

Appendix II

. . .and the short of it'

*Affects**/**percepts****/***lignes de fuite* [***lines of flight***]*****

Krapp (avec vivacité).–*Ah !** (Il se penche sur le registre, tourne les pages, trouve l'inscription qu'il cherche, lit.) **Boîte. . .trrois. . .bobine. . . ccinq.**** (Il lève la tête et regarde fixement devant lui. Avec délectation.) *Bobine! (*Pause.) *Bobiine!* (Sourire heureux. Il se penche sur la table et commence à farfouiller dans les boîtes en les examinant de tout près.)

Boîte. . .trrois. . .trrois. . .quatre. . . deux. . .(avec surprise). . .*neuf! Nom de Dieu!. . .sept. . .ah! Petite coquine!* (Il prend une boîte, l'examine

de tout près.) **Boîte trrois.** (Il la pose sur la table, l'ouvre et se penche sur les bobines qu'elle contient.) **Bobine**. . .(il se penche sur le registre)**. . .ccinq. . .ccinq. . .***ah! Petite fripouille!* (Il sort une bobine, l'examine de tout près.) **Bobine ccinq.** (Il la pose sur la table, referme la boîte trois, la remet avec les autres, reprend la bobine.) **Boîte trrois, bobine ccinq.** (Il se penche sur le registre, lit l'inscription en bas de page.) **Maman en paix enfin**. . .*Hm*. . .**La balle noire. . .**(Il lève la tête, rêvasse, se penche de nouveau sur le registre, lit.) **La boniche brune. . .**(Il lève la tête, rêvasse, se penche de nouveau sur le registre, lit.) **Légère amélioration de l'état intestinal. . .***Hm***. . .Mémorable. . .***quoi?* (Il regarde de plus près, lit.) **Equinoxe, mémorable équinoxe.** (Il lève la tête, regarde dans le vide devant lui.Intrigué.) *Mémorable équinoxe?*. . . (Pause, il hausse les épaules, se penche de nouveau sur le registre, lit.) **Adieu à l'a. . .**(il tourne la page)**. . .mour.**

Bande (voix forte, un peu solennelle, manifestement celle de Krapp à une époque très antérieure).–***Trente-neuf ans aujourd'hui, solide comme un–******(En voulant s'installer plus confortablement il fait tomber une des boîtes, jure, débranche l'appareil, balaye violemment boîtes et registre par terre, ramène la bande au point de départ, rebranche l'appareil, reprend sa posture.) ***Trente-neuf ans aujourd'hui, solide comme un pont, à part mon vieux point faible, et intellectuellement, j'ai maintenant tout lieu de le soupçonner, au. . .***(il hésite)***. . .à la crête de la vague–ou peu s'en faut.*** (*DB*, pp.11–15).

[KRAPP: (briskly).– *Ah!* (He bends over ledger, turns the pages, finds the entry he wants, reads.) **Box . . . thrree . . . spool . . . five.**** (He raises his head and stares front. With relish.) *Spool!* (Pause.) *Spooool!* (Happy smile. Pause. He bends over table, starts peering and poking at the boxes.) **Box . . . thrree . . . thrree . . . four . . . two** . . . (with surprise)...*nine! good God!* . . . *seven* . . . *ah! the little rascal!* (He takes up box, peers at it.) **Box thrree.** (He lays it on table, opens it and peers at spools inside.) **Spool . . .** (he peers at ledger) . . . **five . . .** (he peers at spools) . . . five . . . five . . . *ah! the little scoundrel!* (He takes out a spool, peers at it.) **Spool five.** (He lays it on table, closes box three, puts it back with the others, takes up the spool.) **Box thrree, spool five**. (He bends over the machine, looks up. With relish.) Spooool! (Happy smile. He bends, loads spool on machine, rubs his hands.) Ah! (He peers at ledger, reads entry at foot of page.) **Mother at rest at last**...*Hm*...**The black ball**. . . (He raises his head, stares blankly front. Puzzled.) Black ball? . . . (He peers again at ledger, reads.) **The dark nurse** . . . (He raises his head, broods, peers again at ledger, reads.) **Slight improvement in bowel condition. . . .** *Hm* . . . **Memorable**...*what?* (He peers closer.) **Equinox, memorable equinox**.

(He raises his head, stares blankly front. Puzzled.) *Memorable equinox?* . . . (Pause. He shrugs his shoulders, peers again at ledger, reads.) **Farewell to–**(he turns page)–love.

TAPE: (strong voice, rather pompous, clearly Krapp's at a much earlier time). ***Thirty-nine today, sound as a–****(Settling himself more comfortably he knocks one of the boxes off the table, curses, switches off, sweeps boxes and ledger violently to the ground, winds tape back to the beginning, switches on, resumes posture.) ***Thirty-nine today, sound as a bell, apart from my old weakness, and intellectually I have now every reason to suspect at the . . .*** (hesitates) . . . **the *crest of a wave–or thereabouts*** (*KLT*, pp.10–11)].

Notes

1. 'Haecceity; [. . .] (Duns Scotus) [. . .]. The quality implied in the use of *this,* as *this man*; (thisness); hereness and nowness; that quality or mode of being in virtue of which a thing is or becomes a definite individual; individuality': *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.1238.
2. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (Paris: Flammarion, 1966). Hereafter referred to as *D*. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux. Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, vol. 2 (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1980). Hereafter referred to as *MP*. All translations of quotations from these and other works by Deleuze are the editors'.
3. Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.39–40.
4. Gilles Deleuze, *L'Image-Mouvement* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1983), pp.150–1.
5. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié, 4 vols, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1987–1989), IV, pp.467–8. Hereafter referred to as *RTP*. English translations are taken from the following edition: Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, ed. Christopher Prendergast, tr. various, 6 vols (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2002), VI, p.197. Hereafter referred to as *SLT*.
6. See, for example, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964): 'Lorsque Proust compare son oeuvre à une cathédrale ou à une robe, ce n'est pas pour se réclamer d'un Logos comme belle totalité mais au contraire pour faire valoir un droit à l'inachèvement, aux coutures et aux rapiéçages' (p.193) [When Proust compares his work to a cathedral or a dress, it is not to call on a Logos as appealing totality but, on the contrary, to valorize the right to incompletion, to the seams, and the patches]. Hereafter referred to as *PS*.
7. 'Le style est essentiellement métaphore mais la métaphore est essentiellement métamorphose' (*PS*, p.61) [Style is essentially metaphor, but metaphor is essentially metamorphosis].
8. Deleuze's notion of artistic writing, whether cinematographic, musical, or textual, centres on the inscription of difference as a principle of immanence.

Informed in part by Bergson's ideas of creativity as flow, élan, or duration, a space-time that is neither beginning nor end but a continuing, writing is a rhizomatic process, according to Deleuze and Guattari's famous figure elaborated in *Mille Plateaux* [*A Thousand Plateaus*]. The rhizomatic (a rejection of the Hegelian universal and the notion of synthesis) embraces a movement of becoming, or a *devenir* composed of multiple, unpredictable movements or assemblages. It is contrasted with another figure, associated with Cartesianism, that is the arboreal, or thought that is grounded in law, organization, and ideas of origin and end. Deleuzian thought, in the case of Proust's *Recherche*, posits a *roman fleuve* of a Heraclitean nature, a novel of movement and flow where one can never bathe in the same river twice. For Beckett, to whom Deleuze dedicated two essays, and whose prose text 'Imagination morte imaginez' (*D*, pp.93–123) ['Imagination Dead Imagine'] is playfully cited by Deleuze in the chapter in *Dialogues* entitled 'Psychanalyse morte, psychanalysez' ['Psychoanalysis dead, Psychoanalyze'], 'exhaustion' or *épuisement* is the marker of pure intensity. As Christian Descamps notes in *Les Idées Philosophiques contemporaines en France*, 'Penser les différences – sans les ranger sous un concept unique, universel – c'est réfléchir artistement ce par quoi le donné est donné, c'est aimer le sensible' [To think differences – without ordering them within a unique, universal concept – means reflecting artistically that by which the given is given, it is loving the perceptible] (Paris: Bordas, 1986), p.17.

9. 'Ce second élément qui vient déranger le *studium*, je l'appellerai donc *punctum*; car *punctum*, c'est aussi: piqûre, petit trou, petite tache, petite coupure – et aussi coup de dés. Le *punctum* d'une photo, c'est ce hasard qui, en elle, *me point* (mais aussi me meurtrit, me poigne)' [I shall call this second element that disturbs the *stadium*, *punctum*, because *punctum* is also: prick, small hole, small spot, small cut – and also a throw of the dice. The *punctum* of a photograph is that chance which, in itself, pierces me (but also bruises me, stings me)]: Roland Barthes, *La Chambre claire* (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma; Gallimard, Editions du Seuil, 1980), p.49 [tr. ed.].
10. In *Proust et les signes*, Deleuze says of Proust's style that: 'Le style n'est pas l'homme, le style, c'est l'essence elle-même. [...] C'est que l'essence est en elle-même différence' (*PS*, p.62) [Style is not the man, style is essence itself. [...] Essence is in itself difference]; and also that 'Le style est l'explication des signes à des vitesses de développement différentes, en suivant les chaînes associatives propres à chacun d'eux, en atteignant pour chacun d'eux le point de rupture de l'essence comme Point de vue' (*PS*, p.199) [Style is the explanation of signs at different speeds of evolution, signs that are following the associative links proper to each one of them, that are each one attaining the point of rupture of essence as Point of view].
11. Gilles Deleuze, *L'Epuisé*, in Samuel Beckett *Quad: et Trio du fantôme,... que nuages..., Nacht und Traüme*, tr. from English by Edith Fournier (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1992). Hereafter referred to as *EP*. The English translation of *L'Epuisé* is reproduced in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, tr. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). Hereafter referred to as *ECC*.
12. For Deleuze, textuality is configured like a machine productive of affects and percepts: 'la littérature comme production, comme mise en oeuvre de

machines productrices d'effets' (*PS*, p.200) [literature as production, as the bringing into play of machines that produce effects]. This distinguishes writing from the writer, writing as movement, affect, grace or gift, individuation without individuals: 'Il y a moins un narrateur qu'une machine de la Recherche, et moins un héros que des agencements de la machine' (*PS*, p.217) [The *Recherche* has less a narrator than a machinery of Search, less a hero than machine assemblages].

13. See Daniel Smith's introduction to the translation of *Essays Critical and Clinical* (*ECC*, p.xxxiv).
14. Samuel Beckett, *L'Innommable* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1953), p.213. The English version is taken from the following edition: Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*, in *The Beckett Trilogy* (London: Picador, 1979), p.382.
15. In *L'Epuisé*, Deleuze refers to 'cette langue atomique, disjonctive, coupée, hachée' (*EP*, p.66) ['the atomic, disjunctive, cut and chopped language' (*ECC*, p.156)] to which Beckett's characters are 'reduced' in a fantastic decomposition of the self.
16. It is important to note, however, that the narrator in *Le Temps retrouvé* [*Time Regained*] rejects any notion of the novel as a cinematographic 'parade' of images: 'Quelques-uns voulaient que le roman fût une sorte de défilé cinématographique des choses. Cette conception était absurde. Rien ne s'éloigne plus de ce que nous avons perçu en réalité qu'une telle vue cinématographique' (*RTP*, IV, p.461) ['Some even wanted the novel to be a cinematographic stream of things. This was an absurd idea. Nothing sets us further apart from what we have really perceived than that sort of cinematographic approach' (*SLT*, VI, p.191)]. For Proust, '[. . .] le style pour l'écrivain, aussi bien que la couleur pour le peintre est une question non de technique mais de vision. Il est la révélation, qui serait impossible par des moyens directs et conscients, de la différence qualitative qu'il y a dans la façon dont nous apparaît le monde, différence qui, s'il n'y avait pas l'art, resterait le secret éternel de chacun' (*RTP*, IV, p.474) ['style for a writer, like colour for a painter, is question not of technique but of vision. It is the revelation, which would be impossible by direct or conscious means, of the qualitative difference in the ways we perceive the world, a difference which, if there were no art, would remain the eternal secret of each individual' (*SLT*, VI, p.204)].
17. In Appendix I, entitled 'The long. . .', I attempt to map out the intensities of affects, or what is felt – the type in italics –, and percepts, or what is received or intuited – the type in bold –, as they coalesce into lines of flight or disjunctive identity – the type in both bold and italics. As a very basic – and flawed – attempt to register visually the assemblages and blocks of the passage, the schema aims to map out the composition of visual rhythm or intensities of affects and percepts that emerge in the episode.
18. In Deleuze's thought, difference is a paradoxical sameness: 'Les personnages de Beckett sont toujours au milieu d'un chemin, déjà en route, en perpétuelle involution. Le milieu n'est pas une moyenne – il s'agit d'une vitesse absolue' (*D*, p.38) [Beckett's characters are always on a path, already *en route*, in perpetual involution. The middle is not an average but an absolute speed].
19. For Deleuze, '[l]e bégaiement créateur est ce qui fait pousser la langue par le milieu, comme de l'herbe, ce qui fait de la langue un rhizome au lieu d'un arbre, ce qui met la langue en perpétuel déséquilibre': *Critique et Clinique*

(Paris: Minuit, 1993), p.140 ['Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome, instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium' (*ECC*, pp.111)]. The stuttering of Beckett is also physically embodied in the enfeebled gait of his characters. In Appendix II, entitled '...and the short of it', I map out this 'stuttering of language' in terms of Deleuzian affects and percepts.

20. Samuel Beckett, *La dernière bande* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1959), pp.14–15. Hereafter referred to as *DB*. English versions are taken from the following edition: Samuel Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Embers* (London: Faber & Faber, 1959), pp.11–12. Hereafter referred to as *KLT*.
21. Timothy Murphy, 'Only Intensities Subsist: Samuel Beckett's *Nohow On*', in *Deleuze and Literature*, eds Ian Buchanan and John Marks (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp.229–50 [p.234].

12

The Gift of Time: Reading Proust Reading Deleuze Reading Proust

Jim Reid

What would Proust say about Gilles Deleuze's reading of *A la recherche du temps perdu* in *Proust et les signes*? We will never know. But we can explore what his narrator has to say about theories of difference and time that resemble Deleuze's. The narrator's most far-reaching exploration of difference and time, I have proposed elsewhere, takes place in passages on what the narrator calls the two rhetorical 'aspects' of the Instant, which he finds in the works of the fictional painter Elstir and fleshes out in key passages.[1] Deleuze's reading of the *Recherche* complicates the best known narrative of Proustian time. According to Deleuze, the narrator redefines all repeated signs of difference – not only differences between social classes and lovers, but between the affective experiences of different authors – within an ongoing process by which the novel's signs differentiate themselves from each other and themselves. Repetition for Deleuze is at most a handmaiden of difference, the means by which differentiation perpetuates itself. But for Proust there is a second aspect of time which redefines all signs, including the sign 'differentiation'. It is the means by which art creates the illusion of difference and its pure repetition. This second aspect of time is critical to his final decision to write a novel based on time itself. For Proust's narrator, the *Recherche* is a gift of time which is constituted, I will argue, by the interplay between its two aspects: the differentiation of signs from themselves and the repetition of signs.

Deleuze's major contribution to the field of Proust studies is his rereading of the narrator's theory of the aesthetic function of impressions and involuntary memories which he interprets as part of the novel's active production of difference. Time, for Deleuze, is a becoming of difference (*PS*, pp.51–3, 137 & 218).[2] The process of differentiation structures the three, hierarchically-related machines that constitute Proust's 'literary

machine' (*PS*, pp.83–102, 174–92 & 218). The first machine produces 'group' differences: the multiplicity of society's shared material signs which distinguish social subjects and objects. It differentiates the aristocratic Guermantes from their stodgy cousins, the Courvoisier, and both from the bourgeois Mme Verdurin and Marcel. It also produces love's deceitful signs of difference in the form of 'serial' differences between the lies of, and about, Marcel's successive loves, Gilberte and Albertine. This first machine of society and love generates what Deleuze calls 'empty time'; it does not individualize, but only discloses the intellectual laws that structure social and amorous desire. The second machine produces a multiplicity of individualizing sensory signs – impressions and involuntary memories – which subordinate intelligence to affectivity. It generates the 'full' time of individualization. This machine appears to be contradicted by the third literary machine which generates a multiplicity of signs of death as eternal change. This contradiction disappears, however, when both are given their proper 'place' within Proust's overall literary machine. The literary machine dematerializes all the work's fragmented, material signs and produces immaterial differences that unify these simulacra of the work's difference (*PS*, pp.61 & 153). This virtual web of differences constitutes the work's form and style, its unity, being, and truth: '[T]ruth' exists only in 'the formal structure of the work of art' (*PS*, p.201).[3]

Proust's narrator theorizes and illustrates the rhetorical process that makes Deleuze's theory of differentiation possible. This takes place in his meditation on the two aspects of the Instant (*RTP*, II, pp.419–22; *RTPa*, II, pp.434–5).[4] As he interprets examples of two periods of Elstir's paintings, he argues that they represent very different modes of consciousness which are structured by reverse substitutions of signs. The first aspect of the Instant occurs when the mind replaces society's conventional signs, which enable us to recognize things, with unconventional signs and produces an 'impression', as when a driver looks at a wall and sees the mirage of a street. This impression may be new or the repetition of a past impression as in involuntary memories. The replacement of conventional with unconventional signs in the formation of impressions produces metaphors for the artist's unique manner of seeing the world which distinguish him as an individualized subject of art. The second aspect of the Instant is structured by the mind's rapid erasure of its impressions' unconventional signs by repeating conventional signs, as when the driver realizes that he is looking at a wall. This second rhetorical aspect makes possible the fictions of conscious recognition and realism in the *Recherche*. The narrative, I would argue, unfolds the

two simultaneous, rhetorical aspects of every instant in two interweaving narratives of Time.

The narrator illustrates the first aspect of the Instant by interpreting Elstir's oil painting of his impression of a working-class 'fête' (picnic) by the sea (*RTP*, II, pp.420–1; *RTPa*, II, pp.436–7). At first, Marcel's attention is drawn to the painting's repetition of conventional signs of social difference: an upper class dilettante gazing at a working-class fête in which he is socially 'out of place'. But this static painting is constituted by a multitude of juxtaposed signs of difference that structure its own reading over time. The initial production of signs of social difference in Marcel's mind is followed by the production of a series of differentiations which constitutes more and more comprehensive signs of difference. Thus, after Marcel's mind recognizes social signs of difference, his attention is turned away from these group signs and towards unconventional sensory metaphors of the painter as a unique gazing subject:

> Ce qui ravissait dans la robe d'une femme cessant un moment de danser à cause de la chaleur et de l'essoufflement, était chatoyant aussi, et de la même manière, dans la toile d'une voile arrêtée, dans l'eau du petit port, dans le ponton de bois, dans les feuillages et dans le ciel. (*RTP*, II, pp.420–1)
>
> [What delighted one in the dress of a woman who had stopped dancing for a moment because she was hot and out of breath shimmered too, and in the same way, in the cloth of a motionless sail, in the water of the little harbour, in the wooden landing-stage, in the leaves of the trees and in the sky. (*RTPa*, II, p.436)]

Seemingly ubiquitous, shimmering reflections transform the painting's conventional signs of a recognizable subject (the gazing dilettante) and object (the working class fête) into tropes. These tropes turn Marcel's interpreting mind away from the literal meanings of the painting's repeated social signs and towards sensory signs which have been produced by Elstir's unique manner of transforming these signs in his gaze and art. Not only does this turning of tropes transform social signs of difference into metaphors for the artist's unique gaze, it also reveals them to be mere simulacra of the work's difference:

> Comme, dans un des tableaux que j'avais vus à Balbec, l'hôpital, aussi beau sous son ciel de lapis que la cathédrale elle-même, semblait, plus hardi qu'Elstir théoricien, qu'Elstir homme de goût et amoureux du Moyen Âge, chanter: 'Il n'y a pas de gothique, il n'y a pas de chef-d'oeuvre, l'hôpital sans style vaut le glorieux portail', de même

> j'entendais: 'La dame un peu vulgaire qu'un dilettante en promenade éviterait de regarder, excepterait du tableau poétique que la nature compose devant lui, cette femme est belle aussi, sa robe reçoit la même lumière que la voile du bateau, et il n'y [a] pas de choses plus ou moins précieuses, la robe commune et la voile en elle-même jolie sont deux miroirs du même reflet. Tout le prix est dans les regards du peintre'. (*RTP*, II, p.421).
>
> [Just as, in one of the pictures that I had seen at Balbec, the hospital, as beautiful beneath its lapis lazuli sky as the cathedral itself, seemed (more daring than Elstir the theorician, than Elstir the man of taste, the lover of things mediaeval) to be intoning: 'There is no such thing as Gothic, there is no such thing as a masterpiece, a hospital with no style is just as good as the glorious porch', so I now heard: 'The slightly vulgar lady whom a man of discernment wouldn't bother to look at as he passed her by, whom he would exclude from the poetical composition which nature has set before him – she is beautiful too; her dress is receiving the same light as the sail of that boat, [No thing is more or less precious]; the commonplace dress and the sail that is beautiful in itself are two mirrors reflecting the same image; their [value] is all in the painter's eye. (*RTP*, II, pp.436–7)][5]

The turning of tropes that structures Marcel's viewing of the fête painting affirms the value of 'full', individualizing sensory signs and negates the value of signs of social distinctions among painted subjects (the dilettante) and objects (the workers), revealing the latter to be 'empty', in Deleuze's terms.

In a third step of differentiation, Elstir's painting reveals these sensory metaphors also to be simulacra of the work's difference. The painting now turns Marcel's attention towards its analogical signs of artistic production. The instant that Elstir paints is not that of the production of visual metaphors, but rather of the artist's transformation of a visual scene into an artificially painted scene: 'Or celui-ci avait su immortellement arrêter le mouvement des heures à cet instant lumineux où la dame avait eu chaud et avait cessé de danser, où l'arbre était cerné d'un pourtour d'ombre, où les voiles semblaient glisser sur un vernis d'or' (*RTP*, II, p.421) ['This eye had succeeded in arresting for all time the motion of the hours at this luminous instant when the lady had felt hot and had stopped dancing, when the tree was encircled with a perimeter of shadow, when the sails seemed to be gliding over a golden [varnish]' (*RTPa*, II, p.427)]. The sun's circling of the shimmering tree with shadow is an analogy for the artist's act of framing his pictorial representations.

Its stopping of the shimmering woman is an analogy for the artist's replacement of life's movement with art's static signs; and its transformation of the water, on which the shimmering boats sail, into golden varnish is an analogy for the painter's transformation of natural life into artificial reflections off oil paint. This redefinition of the sun's shimmering metaphors for the artist's unique gaze within analogies for the act of producing the painting calls into question their metaphorical status by juxtaposing them with contradictory signs of the artist's unique gaze: signs of light are juxtaposed to signs of shade, signs of mobility to signs of immobility, signs of nature to signs of artifice. The artist's unique gaze resembles neither light nor dark, movement nor stasis, nature nor artifice. All visual metaphors for the artistic subject, like social signs of object and subject, are mere constructs, artificial simulacra of Proust's differential act of producing them. The impressionist work thus differentiates itself from all identifiable sensory signs of an object and subject of the act of painting, whether they be social signs, the artist's past impressions and artistic metaphors, or the narrator's impressionist metaphors for himself as describing subject. All are artificially produced simulacra of the work's vital difference.

However, in a final step, differentiation transforms even these signs of the artistic act into mere simulacra. The fête painting turns Marcel's interpreting mind away from its analogies for the act of artistic creation and towards signs of universal alternation and death, rendering all difference ineffable:

> Mais justement parce que l'instant pesait sur nous avec tant de force, cette toile si fixée donnait l'impression la plus fugitive, on sentait que la dame allait bientôt s'en retourner, les bateaux disparaître, l'ombre changer de place, la nuit venir, que le plaisir finit, que la vie passe et que les instants, montrés à la fois par tant de lumières qui y voisinent ensemble, ne se retrouvent pas. (*RTP*, II, p.421)
>
> [But precisely because that instant impressed itself on one with such force, this unchanging canvas gave the most fleeting impression: one felt that the lady would presently go home, the boats drift away, the shadow change place, night begin the fall; that pleasure comes to an end, that life passes and that instants, illuminated by the convergence at one and the same time of so many lights, cannot be recaptured. (*RTPa*, II, p.437)]

The process by which the painting differentiates itself from its fragmented simulacra ultimately dramatizes the flight of difference from

the paintings' signs. Neither literal signs of social and natural differences, nor metaphorical signs of the artist's unique gaze, nor analogical signs of the artistic act can refer to what Elstir originally saw or did. Like Marcel's memory of Albertine's lies, pictorial signs are always unfaithful to the painter's perceptual experience and act.[6] Art cannot represent a unique past instant, whether it be the narrator's impressions of Combray, of Elstir's painting, of past impressions, or of his act of producing an impression. Art differentiates itself from all signs of difference or of the act of differentiation.

According to the narrator's impressionist theory and to Deleuze's reading, the flight of difference from the painting's signs and theories does not contradict the differential nature of the work; rather, it reveals that truth of differentiation. In a later passage on Vinteuil's musical Septet, the narrator explains that radical differentiation transforms all the work's signs of difference into signs of an ineffable difference for which there is no sign in the language. The painting or the musical composition is thus constituted by catachreses.[7] In Beckett's words, it is 'an instrument of resurrection because an instrument of death' (*P*, p.22). The narrator and Deleuze disagree, however, on the nature of this reborn difference. According to the narrator, it expresses the artist's or composer's unique and ineffable manner of seeing or hearing as an unchanging subject:

> comme si, en dépit des conclusions qui semblent se dégager de la science, l'individuel existait. [...] Vinteuil, cherchant puissamment à être nouveau, s'interrogeait lui-même, de toute la puissance de son effort créateur atteignait sa propre essence à ces profondeurs où, quelque question qu'on lui pose, c'est du même accent, le sien propre, qu'elle répond. (*RTP*, III, p.256)
>
> [as if in spite of the conclusions to which science seems to point, the individual did exist. [...] Vinteuil, [powerfully] striving to [be] new, interrogated himself, with all the power of his creative [efforts], reached down to his [own essence] at those depths where, whatever be the question asked, it is in the same accent, its own, that it replies. (*RTPa*, III, p.258)]

According to Deleuze, by contrast, the differences that individualize the work constitute only some of the multitude of differentiating singularities that the overall becoming of the work produces. All the work's catachreses refer only to its formal virtual web of differences which 'does not refer to anything else', even to the author's individuality (*PS*, p.201, my translation).

Of course, without referential signs, there can be no material evidence to support the existence of either Proust's ineffable unique subject or Deleuze's immaterial web of textual differences. The reality of subjective difference 'can be apprehended only [...] as a retrospective hypothesis' (*P*, p.4). This is why, in passages preceding and following the Septet passage, Proust's narrator, unlike Deleuze, explicitly questions any idealist theory of art as the production of ineffable or virtual differences. This questioning is implicit in his discussion of the flight of difference from the fête painting's signs of artistic production. The process of differentiation does not merely reduce material signs of difference to simulacra; it calls into question and deconstructs these signs, including catachreses, and it raises the possibility that difference is an artistic illusion. While playing Wagner's *Tristan* on the piano, Marcel thus finds himself troubled by the technical facility with which the composer produces individualizing effects in his listener: 'Serait-ce [cette habileté vulcanienne] qui donnerait chez les grands artistes l'illusion d'une originalité foncière, irréductible, en apparence reflet d'une réalité plus qu'humaine, en fait produit d'un labeur industrieux?' (*RTP*, III, pp.161–2) ['Could it be this [Vulcan-like skill] that gave to great artists the illusory aspect of a fundamental, irreducible originality, apparently the reflection of a more than human reality, actually the result of industrious toil?' (*RTPa*, III, pp.158–9)]. What if the repeated production of differences in Wagner's music, as in Elstir's fête painting, Vinteuil's Septet, and Proust's *Recherche*, generates only the illusion of a virtual difference which deceives listeners, viewers, and readers into believing that this difference is real? This Nietzschian possibility undermines any ground for the existence of a real act of differentiation or a real being of virtual differences. It reveals that the impressions of uniqueness produced by Elstir's painting, Vinteuil's music, and Proust's novel cannot escape uncertainty over whether they express the creator's difference. Deleuze also asserts that differentiation is groundless, but he grounds this groundlessness by saying that it 'swarms with [differences]' (*DR*, pp.276–7, my translation). He thus suspends the negative, logical implications of signs of death for his theory of a differential time and art.

Proustian differentiation is an illogical drive to identify with only one of the two aspects of time, which he knows to be logically impossible. His narrator explores the nature of this drive in the Montjouvain passage of *Combray* which concludes Marcel's walks on the Méséglise Way (*RTP*, I, pp.54–65). Vinteuil's lesbian daughter is Proust's anti-Oedipus who is driven by an obsessive need to differentiate herself from her deceased father's laws of virtue. She repeatedly carries out a sado-masochistic

ritual in which she projects onto her lover her sadistic drive to profane her father's memory and negate his Oedipal law which condemns her lesbian desires. Her lover obligingly threatens to spit on the father's portrait, while she adopts the masochistic position of protesting against these threats. The pain associated with her masochistic role does not arouse her pleasure, however; rather, her pleasure is produced by her vicarious identification with her lover's act of profaning her father's memory. By contrast, Deleuze, who also projects the negativity of his anti-Oedipal rhetoric of differentiation onto the Oedipal law, argues that the masochistic role suspends all negativity.[8] It 'liberates [. . .] from the father's likeness' (*M*, p.131). Masochistic suspension of negativity frees differentiation from Oedipal negation and makes art possible (*M*, p.134). This masochistic suspension of negativity is, for Proust's narrator, a denial of the negativity of differentiation. Differentiation is always also a sadistic act of profaning the memories of those he loved, particularly memories of his mother and giver of the law (*RTP*, III, pp.902–3).[9]

For Proust's narrator, the drive for differentiation and liberation from the Oedipal law necessarily repeats the law, enchains itself to the law. Mlle Vinteuil can deny her father's virtue only by repeating his virtuous mannerisms and words. When she puts her father's portrait on a table in preparation for her lover's arrival, she does so in the same way that her father would put his music on the piano before Marcel and his mother would visit him. After her lover comes in, she asks who could have put his portrait on the table, repeating the words with which her father would ask Marcel and his mother who could have put his music on the piano. When her lover threatens to spit on her father's portrait, she protests, just as her father would virtuously deny his 'selfish' wish to show off his musical art.[10] The daughter's very attempt to carry out her drive to liberate herself from the father's law and gestures thus indirectly foregrounds her desire to repeat the law and its negative, castrating effects. This necessary repetition of the Oedipal law defers indefinitely any completion of the act of differentiation and liberation.[11] As Žižek states, Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus as desiring machine is inseparable from 'Oedipus as desiring machine' (*OB*, p.66).

The anti-Oedipal subject is thus split between conflicting desires and logics. So, too, is the paternal law. Mlle Vinteuil's identification with differentiation presupposes a caricature of the paternal law as pure repetition. Her act of differentiation indirectly repeats her father's virtuous denial of social desire and pleasure, but it also repeats his drive for differentiation in the composition of his music, as illustrated by the Septet.

What she repeats, therefore, is a gap in the Oedipal law, a gap between repetition of the law and differentiation from the law. In Proust, there is no coherent law from which to differentiate oneself. Deleuze's drive for differentiation from Oedipal and Capitalist laws thus hides its own repetition of the gap between difference and repetition that inhabits the law.

What drives the act of differential negation, and what Mlle Vinteuil cannot yet accept, is, paradoxically, her father's and her own fundamental indifference to whether or not their negations produce a real difference. As Beckett ironically says of Marcel's search for different loves: 'Considered as a progression, these endless series of renovations leave us as indifferent as the heterogeneity of any one of its terms, and the inconsequence of any given me disturbs us as little as the comedy of substitution' (*P*, p.16). The Montjouvain passage and the passages on the *côté de Méséglise* conclude with the narrator's statement that Mlle Vinteuil would cease to experience pleasure in re-enacting her sadistic fantasy if she could simply recognize in herself the universal indifference to the pain that we cause, which is 'la forme terrible et permanente de la cruauté' (*RTP*, I, p.165) ['the most lasting and terrible form of cruelty' (*RTPa*, I, p.180)]. Mlle Vinteuil's ritual act of differentiation from the paternal law is the only means by which she can give herself pleasure, since her father has taught her to identify pleasure with evil and the denial of pleasure with virtue. She can find pleasure, therefore, only by enacting evil in his and her own eyes. It is thus pleasure, not differentiation, that she truly seeks and pleasure is indifferent to its particular means. Her search for pleasure breaks down the logical distinction between differentiation and repetition. If Mlle Vinteuil were to recognize her indifference to the means by which she gives herself pleasure, the narrator argues, she would realize that she is not really evil, and her fantasy of cruel differentiation would lose its hold on her. It is this underlying indifference behind the drive for differentiation that Marcel experiences before the madeleine episode and before the final episode of the novel when he has lost faith in his ability to create a differential work of art. Deleuze can thus maintain his subordination of repetition to differentiation only by denying the pain that his drive causes and its underlying indifference to this pain.

The modernist act of differentiation thus produces a breakdown of the differentiation/repetition distinction and a feeling of indifference. It also foregrounds the other aspect – quite different, it is true – of the Instant. This very different aspect of time is characterized by a desire to re-establish the illusion of difference by repeating conventional signs (*RTP*, II, p.421). Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense*, as described by Žižek, makes a similar distinction between the 'real' and the 'formal' (differential)

genesis of reality, but without questioning his subordination of the first to the second (*OB*, pp.20–6). Proust, by contrast, dramatizes how the breakdown of the difference/repetition distinction necessarily gives rise to the other aspect of the Instant. He does so, for example, in his transition from the Montjouvain passage (which is the culmination of Marcel's meditations on differentiation on the Méséglise Way) to the passages recounting his walks on the Guermantes Way. Seeing a carafe immersed in the Vivonne river, Marcel experiences an impression that difference itself, the very source of art, has broken down (*RTP*, I, p.168). The carafe not only contains water, it is contained by water. This reversibility destroys the container/contents and sign/meaning distinctions and makes him feel that he cannot pick up the carafe and drink the water. It reinforces his sense during these walks that he is incapable of creating a work of art (*RTP*, I, p.178). But the impression of the absence of distinction makes him desire to re-establish the repetition/difference distinction. He becomes thirsty. Similarly, when he sees the fabled Duchesse de Guermantes for the first time in the local church, he has the impression that the body of this illustrious woman is no different from the body of his aunt's banal bourgeois friend, Mme Sazarat (*RTP*, I, pp.174–8). But this impression of a lack of distinction not only makes him desire that distinction; it motivates him to create the illusion of difference by repeating over and over to himself the words with which Combray's residents glorify the Duchess's greatness. And lo and behold, she suddenly appears to be superior to all others once again.

There is a Proustian enjoyment not only in the act of deconstructing conventional signs of the difference/repetition distinction in order to express an ineffable subjective difference, but also in creating the illusion of a difference by repeating conventional signs of difference. The latter is the basis of realist illusion in the *Recherche* which permeates the novel despite the narrator's repeated negations of realist discourse. *A la recherche du temps perdu* methodically recreates the fictional impression that a unique Marcel actually existed in a real past Combray in the late nineteenth century and that this Marcel became Proust.

Proust creates the realist illusion of difference by reversing the rhetorical movement that structures the first aspect of the Instant. Whereas the fête painting turns tropes from conventional literal signs of difference to ineffable figural differences, Elstir's early mythological watercolours turn tropes from conventional metaphors of difference to literal signs of difference (*RTP*, II, pp.421–2). The watercolours repeat time-worn romantic symbols for the poetic act, symbols that have lost their power to evoke the difference they signify. Inspiration, like Elstir's impressions,

is represented by the conventional mythological Muse; the unique romantic subject of art, the impressionist artist, by the tired mythological symbol of an asexual poet; and the flight of time into death by the hostile, sexual Centaur. The banality of these romantic symbols of unique poet, inspiration, and death undercuts the differences that they signify. It questions the sign/meaning and repetition/differentiation distinctions and produces a sense of critical indifference. But this seeming indifference to the distinction between the symbols' conventional container and their conventional figural contents, like Marcel's impression of the carafe, produces a thirst to artificially re-establish that distinction.

Proust's description of the watercolours creates the illusion of re-establishing the difference/repetition distinction by transforming the romantic symbols into descriptive tropes which turn the reader's attention away from their conventional figurative meanings – inspiration, poet, death – and towards their conventional literal meanings – woman, man, and horse. Proust makes his asexual poet act, not like a mythical being, but like an everyday, sexual contemporary man who is taking a stroll with a woman. He multiplies the unique Muse into many everyday women who are taking a daily walk together. His hostile, sexualized Centaur acts like an everyday man who takes pity on the poet and like a domestic horse that brings him back to society. These everyday actions create the impression that the scene takes place in reality as we conventionally represent it, as if the mythical poet, muse, and Centaur existed in a real past historical moment. Proust's description thus gives the fable's symbol 'une sorte de réalité historique vécue, [. . .] le peint et le relate au passé défini' (*RTP*, II, p.422) ['a sort of lived historical reality to the fable, [paints] and [relates] it in the past [definite] tense' (*RTPa*, II, p.438)]. He reinforces this historical illusion through the traditional realist technique of adding minute details of a natural background. Conventional actions and details of nature displace the viewer's attention away from the questions posed by the symbols' conventionality and towards the realism of the actions and landscape, just as Proust's narrative of Marcel's everyday actions and his wealth of descriptive details of late nineteenth-century French landscape and society make us forget that he is a retrospective fictional creation.

The watercolours illustrate Proust's use of rhetoric, not only as a modernist mode of creating and expressing a unique subject, but as a mode of realist persuasion. The novelist's foregrounding of realist signs, which hides the complexity of his differential and deconstructive rhetoric, makes the idea of a unique author more comprehensible and believable to an everyday social reader. This rhetoric of realist persuasion, like his

rhetoric of differentiation, is ambiguous. It can be read in accordance with the narrator's materialist theory as a sign that the *Recherche* is structured by a Nietzschian mode of deception and persuasion, not unlike St Loup's military strategy, Norpois's diplomacy, or Albertine's lies. Or it can be read as a postmodern parody of society's signs of similarity and difference, as in Fredric Jameson's self-conscious parody of society's commodified signs. But Proust's novel does not subordinate his differential rhetoric to his rhetoric of persuasion, any more than it subordinates persuasion to differentiation.

Precisely because of the uncertainty of his idealist and materialist readings, Proust's narrator concludes that his novel 'marquerait certainement avant tout [. . .] la forme [. . .] du Temps' (*RTP*, III, p.1045) ['would certainly [mark] above all [. . .] the form of Time' (*RTPa*, III, p.1103)]. This form is constituted by the interplay between the reverse turning of rhetorical tropes that constitutes the two aspects of Proust's Instant. This interplay revolves around the void that separates and joins the two rhetorical modes of differentiation and realist persuasion. The writing of this temporal interplay, Proust's narrator argues, is a product of the failed drive to privilege differentiation over persuasion, which cannot but reveal its underside of realist persuasion. Writing is also the product of an ethical drive: 'L'ouvrage de l'écrivain n'est qu'une espèce d'instrument optique qu'il offre au lecteur afin de lui permettre de discerner ce que, sans ce livre, il n'eût pas vu en soi-même' (*RTP*, III, p.911) ['the writer's work is merely a kind of optical instrument which he offers to the reader to enable him to discern what, without this book, he would perhaps never have perceived in himself' (*RTPa*, III, p.949)]. *A la recherche du temps perdu* is Proust's gift of time to his readers so that they might read its rhetorical form in their own thoughts and actions, whether or not they are driven towards differentiation or repetition. Is not Deleuze one of those readers? Has he not used the *Recherche* as a lens through which to read one form of time and his own drive for difference? Did he not follow in Proust's footsteps by offering his own lens so that his readers might begin to read time and their own drives?

Notes

1. James Reid, *Proust, Beckett, and Narration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.31–45. Hereafter referred to as *PBN*.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, 4th ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976). Hereafter referred to as *PS*. All translations are author's own. On becoming in Deleuze, see Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze*

and Consequences (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp.15–19. Hereafter referred to as *OB*.

3. The author's reading of *Proust et les signes* focuses primarily on the latter half of the book, written several years later, which most fully develops his theory of differential becoming.
4. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, 3 vols, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1954). English translations of Proust's novel are from the following edition: Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, tr. C.K. Scott and Terence Kilmartin, 3 vols (New York: Random House, 1981). Hereafter referred to as *RTPa*. Involuntary memories, as Beckett notes in *Proust* (New York: Grove Press, 1970), are present impressions which are produced by a repetition of the same past sensation that produced a past impression: '[I]f by some miracle of analogy the central impression of a past sensation recurs as an immediate stimulus which can be instinctively identified by the subject with the model of duplication, [. . .] then the total past sensation, not its echo nor its copy, but the sensation itself, annihilating every spatial and temporal restriction, comes in a rush to engulf the subject in all the beauty of its infallible proportion' (p.54). Hereafter referred to as *P*. Elstir has learned voluntarily to evoke, in his workshop, involuntary impressions of past impressions in order to paint the latter in his workshop. See *PBN*, p.29.
5. Author's amendments to the published translation of *Remembrance* are included in square brackets.
6. See *RTP*, III, pp.152–3 and *PBN*, pp.70–2.
7. 'La catachrèse, en général, consiste en ce qu'un signe déjà affecté à une première idée, le soit aussi à une idée nouvelle qui elle-même n'en avait point ou n'en a plus d'autre en propre dans la langue. Elle est par conséquent tout trope d'un usage forcé et nécessaire' [Catechresis in general consists in a sign, which already refers to a first idea, being attached also to a new idea which, in itself, had no sign or no longer had a sign in the language]: Pierre Fontanier, *Les Figures du discours* (Paris: Flammarion, 1968), p.213 (author's translation).
8. Gilles Deleuze, *Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty*, tr. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1991), pp.104–7. Hereafter referred to as *M*.
9. For a discussion of the mother's replacement of the father as law-giver, see *PBN*, pp.15–21.
10. Vinteuil ultimately refused to satisfy his desire and his visitors' request that he play his music. We do not know what Mlle Vinteuil decides because she closes the curtains. The realization of the sadistic threat appears to be less important to Mlle Vinteuil's pleasure than the threat itself.
11. Mlle Vinteuil repeats and inverts the very birth of the law within her brought about by her father's attempts to control his competing desires. See *OB*, p.32.

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Part III
Bodily Encounters

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13

Deviant Masculinity and Deleuzian Difference in Proust and Beckett

Jennifer M. Jeffers

In *Proust and Signs*, Gilles Deleuze maintains that, in *In Search of Lost Time*, Proust is a philosopher of difference because he goes beyond the 'abstract truths of "philosophy" that compromise no one and do not disturb'.[1] Of course, this version of philosophy is the Deleuzian rendering of 'state philosophy' which is aligned with western philosophy's obsession with identity. Deleuze's campaign against 'state philosophy' and identity-thinking began in the 1960s and continued throughout his entire career. In *Deleuze and the Political*, Paul Patton argues that:

> [f]rom his essay on Proust (1972) through to *What is Philosophy?* (1994), Deleuze has pursued the question of the nature of thought. What is at stake in this question is the effort to describe an exercise of thought which is 'opposed to the traditional image which philosophy has projected or erected in thought in order to subjugate it and prevent it from functioning'.[2]

In 'On Nietzsche and the Image of Thought', Deleuze discusses how his interest in Proust concerns his production of a new image of thought: 'Hume, Bergson, and Proust interest me so much because in their work can be found profound elements for a new image of thought [. . .]. Proust, for example, has the idea that every thought is an aggression, appearing under the constraint of a sign, and that we think only when we are forced and constrained to think'.[3] This idea is reiterated in *Proust and Signs*: 'truth is never the product of a prior disposition but the result of a violence in thought' (*PS*, p.16). Moreover, Deleuze posits a similar notion in an essay concerning Beckett. In 'He Stuttered', Deleuze argues that Beckett's prose produces J.L. Austin's 'performative utterance': Quand *dire c'est faire*.[4] While constative utterances are either true or false, performatives

perform deeds (e.g., 'I do' uttered by the bride and groom during a wedding ceremony succeeds in legally marrying the couple). Deleuze claims that Beckett forces the language to stutter, to create a new form of sense: 'This is what happens when the stuttering no longer affects pre-existing words, but, rather, itself ushers in the words that it affects; in this case, the words do not exist independently of the stutter, which selects and links them together' (*HS*, p.23). From a Deleuzian perspective, both Proust's and Beckett's prose have the ability to tear a hole in language and force thought into a new space. In the Proust text, Deleuze reiterates the jolt that is necessary to think: 'Thought is nothing without something that forces and does violence to it' (*PS*, p.95).

With Proust and Beckett, we are forced to think at both the representational and the formal or stylistic levels. It is my contention that the Deleuzian rendering of violence can be traced from Proust's character, Charlus, to any number of Beckett's prose characters, unfolding deviant difference at both the representational and the textual level. Indeed, there is, for example, an uncanny alliance between Charlus and Beckett's character Molloy in terms of each character's body, sexuality and irrational social behaviour. This renders each character counter-discursive in terms of cultural norms and in terms of philosophical expectation. At both the representational and the formal level, Charlus and Molloy fail to reproduce normative patterns, yet succeed in producing a new image of thought.

First, from a representational point of view, Charlus and Molloy fail to enact their conventional gender roles. According to George L. Mosse, the turn-of-the-century European male inherited an established set of 'normative patterns of morality and behavior, that is to say, typical and acceptable ways of behaving and acting within the social setting of the past centuries'.[5] What is more significant is that Mosse conclusively links social respectability, morality, and civil order to the maintenance of masculine normality during this era. Even as the rigid nineteenth-century moral convictions waned, the masculine normative prevailed:

> The male stereotype remained intact in spite of the structural changes that modern society experienced; it was apparently not dependent upon a specific economic, social and political constellation. However, masculinity was in fact dependent upon a certain moral imperative, upon certain normative standards of appearance, behavior, and comportment. And when the traditional value system of the middle class was endangered, the ideal of masculinity was threatened as well. (*IM*, p.8)

The ramifications of the maintenance of these normatives are enormous, especially when we consider the hyper-masculine movements in the twentieth century that are wedded to nationalist agendas such as Fascism, Nazism, and militarism. Countertypes of the male normative are those who are considered 'other' in terms of appearance, behaviour or sexual orientation: 'These countertypes were the traditional "outsiders" such as Jews or gypsies [. . .] and also those who had repudiated or did not fit in with social norms, such as vagrants, the insane or habitual criminals and, last but not least, "unmanly" men and "unwomanly" women' (*IM*, p.13). Charlus's homosexuality places him in the 'unmanly' category, while Molloy, seemingly non-sexual (although he apparently has had sexual relations with men and women), qualifies as a vagabond and, in the end, like Charlus, a Deleuzian madman.

Secondly, the deterritorialization of sense and of the 'major language' tradition is the most threatening epistemological tool these writers wield.[6] At the end of 'He Stuttered', Deleuze argues that Proust and, by implication, Beckett 'overstrain' language so that 'it begins to stutter, murmur, or to mumble' (*HS*, p.28). Eventually, a writer's individual 'style' distorts and contorts language, sometimes reducing it to silence, so that a new thought is pushed into a new space:

> When the language system is so much strained, language suffers a pressure that delivers it to silence. Style – the foreign language system inside language – is made by these two operations; or shall we rather speak, with Proust, of a nonstyle, that is, of 'elements of a style to come which do not yet exist'? Style is the parsimony of language. Face to face, or face to back, to cause language to stutter, and at the same time to bring language to its limit, to its outside, and to its silence – all this will be like the boom and the bust. (*HS*, p.28)

Likewise, according to Deleuze, Proust uses Charlus as a 'master of discourse: with him everything happens by means of words, but on the other hand nothing happens in words' (*PS*, p.178). What Deleuze means is that Charlus escapes the words by occupying the spaces opened between words, by the 'catatonic freezes and extreme velocities' which render Charlus imperceptible (*TP*, p.268). Deleuze states that 'Charlus's investments are above all verbal, so that things or objects present themselves as involuntary signs turned against discourse, sometimes making speech go haywire, sometimes forming a counterlanguage that develops in the silence of encounters' (*PS*, p.178). In the above quotation, as well as in the book on Kafka, Deleuze calls this activity the 'boom' and 'bust'

of language.[7] From this Deleuzian perspective, we can trace a direct line of thought from Charlus to Molloy or, in fact, to any number of Beckett's troubled 'troop of lunatics'. Charting this line of thought and reconsidering each writer's text from a new angle will give us greater insight into not only Proust's and Beckett's texts, but also into Deleuze's.

It is generally acknowledged that Proust modelled Charlus on Robert de Montesquiou who, along with another well-known Parisian homosexual, Jean Lorrain, 'flaunted their decadence, taking advantage of it in order to construct their own full-blown homosexual lifestyle in full view of the public' (*IM*, p.88). Charlus is not exactly out of the closet, but, by the time Marcel surreptitiously watches Charlus's and Jupien's clandestine meeting in the courtyard, the secret divulged, according to Deleuze, is not so secret:

> There are signs of violence and madness constituting a certain pathos, counter to and beneath the deliberate signs arranged by 'logic and fine language'. It is this pathos that will now reveal itself as such in Charlus's appearances where he speaks less and less from the summit of his sovereign organization and increasingly betrays himself in the course of a long social and physical decomposition [. . .]. This is the Charlus–Jupien encounter, in which is revealed the long-awaited secret: the homosexuality of Charlus. But is this really Charlus's secret? For what is discovered is less homosexuality, long since foreseeable and suspected, than a general system that makes such homosexuality into a particular case of a deeper universal madness inextricably intermingling innocence and crime. (*PS*, p.174)

Thus, while normative society would label Charlus's seduction of Jupien in the courtyard and implied sodomizing of him that follows behind closed doors as perverse and deviant, Deleuze argues that Charlus's real perversity is his becoming-madness which finds some outward demonstration in such furtive courtyard encounters.

In addition, masculine patriarchal culture rejects the idea of the effeminate man because, as Lynne Segal argues, 'the persecution of homosexuals is most commonly the act of men against a minority of other men; it is also the forced repression of the "feminine" in all men'.[8] Therefore, later in *Sodom and Gomorrah*, when Marcel speculates on Charlus's becoming-woman, we can interpret the feminine in Charlus as deviating from patriarchal masculinity:

> Although other reasons may have dictated this transformation of M. de Charlus, and purely physical ferments may have set his

> chemistry 'working' and made his body gradually change into the category of women's bodies, nevertheless the change that we record here was one of spiritual origin. [...] By dint of thinking tenderly of men one becomes a woman, and an imaginary skirt hampers one's movements. The obsession, as in the other instance it can affect one's health, may in this instance alter one's sex.[9]

Charlus's becoming-woman is far more deviant than simply performing sexual acts with other men. The transformation from manly to womanly is insidious to the masculine order because it blurs the boundaries between genders, thereby confusing or calling into question the 'natural' order of masculine authority and dominance. Becoming-woman will lead Charlus to becoming-madman. As Deleuze posits, '[f]rom Charlus's first appearances, his strange gaze and his eyes themselves are characterized as those of a spy, a thief, a salesman, a detective, or a *madman*' (*PS*, p.170, Deleuze's italics).

Yet, in terms of forcing thought, it may be in the formal affects of Proust's prose, his 'nonstyle', that we find the more profound difference – the deviance from 'state philosophy'. According to Colleen Lamos, '[t]he theme of sexual inversion that preoccupies so much of *Remembrance* [the *Search*] is bound up with erotically charged textual and stylistic inversions'.[10] Indeed, Charlus's Deleuzian booms and busts are rendered as verbal tirades in which the Baron seems to lose emotional control. If the reader concentrates on the pace of Charlus's rants, a new line of thought is opened up, and we can chart the extreme velocity of the prose which then suddenly turns sluggish and drags to a standstill. One episode in which this occurs is in *The Guermantes Way* when Charlus berates and insults Marcel to the point that Marcel tramples Charlus's hat: ' "Do you suppose that it is within your power to insult me? You evidently are not aware to whom you are speaking? Do you imagine that the envenomed spittle of five hundred little gentlemen of your type, heaped one upon another, would succeed in slobbering so much as the tips of my august toes?" ' (*SLT*, III, p.342). After the hat incident, Marcel moves to leave, but Charlus quickly reverses his position and begs Marcel to come back inside: ' "There now", he said, "don't be childish; come back for a minute; he that loveth well chasteneth well, and if I have chastened you well it is because I love you well" ' (*SLT*, III, p.344). This episode displays what Deleuze calls 'Charlus's investments'; these are 'above all verbal, so that things or objects present themselves as involuntary signs turned against discourse, sometimes making speech go haywire' (*PS*, p.178). Charlus bursts the boundaries of the purely verbal through a manipulation of the tempo of his assault. Indeed, Charlus's performance affects not only the

velocity of the prose, but also Marcel's reaction – emotionally, physically, and verbally. This situation is made evident in the text when Marcel narrates how Charlus's footmen were listening at the door, not – as Marcel first believes – out of concern for security or curiosity, but because Charlus had prepared his rant and pre-arranged an audience: 'the whole of the scene which M. de Charlus had made with me having been prepared and acted, he had himself told them [the footmen] to listen, from a love of the spectacular combined, perhaps, with a "*nunc erudimini*" from which each would derive a suitable profit' (*SLT*, III, p.344). The staged quality of Charlus's outburst testifies to Deleuze's rendering of Charlus as a madman, a becoming-madman. From this characterization, Deleuze's career-long philosophical objective of unhinging thought from identity is evidenced. Not himself, always other, and always, more importantly, forcing the pace of the prose, Charlus is the epitome of Deleuze's image of thought – of what it means to *think* – to push thought into a new space.

From a Deleuzian perspective, therefore, Beckett's character Molloy manifests the same inability to make good sense and the same ability to open up thought as Charlus: he is another becoming-madman. In terms of the novel *Molloy*, the masculine counterdiscourse not only encompasses Molloy and his relationship with his mother and other women, but also includes: issues of paternity; Molloy's confusion concerning a would-be son, Dan; Moran's dysfunctional – to use a contemporary term – relationship with his son Jacques; and homosocial masculine hierarchies played out with the priest, Gaber, and Youdi.[11] Except for his cook, Moran occupies a homogeneous male world that is regulated by levels of power; Moran is controlled by his superior, Youdi, and, in turn, often maliciously manipulates his son, Jacques. Similar to Proust's Charlus, Beckett carefully inverts the modern masculine ideal with the character Molloy in order to enact a slow-but-sure etiolation of modern western masculinity.

Molloy endangers the 'traditional value system of the middle class' (*IM*, p.8) with regard to his body, sexuality and irrational social behaviour. Beckett's emasculation of Molloy manifests a deliberate attempt to insult and dismantle masculine normativity. The use of sport to teach fair play was also used to tone and discipline the body, not only in preparation for manhood, but more precisely for military service. The body's physical fitness, we may recall, is detailed in *Waiting for Godot* (written in the same period as *Molloy*) in Lucky's speech in which 'physical culture' is championed with 'the practice of sports such as tennis football running cycling swimming flying floating riding' and 'gliding'.[12] Molloy, however, gets around on crutches and a chainless bicycle until

he runs over Lousse's dog. Molloy's body, like virtually every other Beckett body, is in the final stages of decay and disease. When the novel opens, he is bedridden, and it is from his bed that, like Proust himself, he supposedly writes his narrative. Molloy's condition and experience is very similar to Malone in the next novel of the trilogy, *Malone Dies*.

Molloy, therefore, is one among many – Murphy, Watt, Malone, Worm, and the Unnamable – who appear to be sexed male, but manifest few masculine gender traits. Molloy's body not only lacks physical vigour, but is also wanting in terms of hygienic habits. For example, when Molloy awakes, he finds that his clothes are missing and that he has been dressed in 'another man's nightdress, another woman's probably, for it was pink and transparent and adorned with ribands and frills and lace' (*ML*, p.44). Just before this passage, when the policeman asks Molloy for his identity papers, he first does not understand what he wants. Then Molloy realizes, 'Ah my papers. Now the only papers I carry with me are bits of newspaper, to wipe myself, you understand, when I have a stool. Oh I don't say I wipe myself every time I have a stool, no, but I like to be in a position to do so, if I have to' (*ML*, p.20). These passages connect two important aspects of masculinity, the outer and inner man. A careless appearance associated with the male body not only implies a lack of virility, but also connotes an irrationality that immediately signals the countertype of the masculine ideal. Mosse, writing on turn-of-the-century constructions of masculinity, describes how 'a person's disordered outward appearance signaled a mind that lacked control over the passions, where male honor had become cowardice, honesty was unknown, and lustfulness had taken the place of purity' (*IM*, p.59). Within this discourse, homosexuals, gypsies, deviants and, like Molloy, derelicts and vagabonds, all appear and *are* counterdiscursive to the masculine ideal. This carelessness of appearance thus connects to Molloy's attitude toward his body and his sexual partners. 'The body', as Berthold Schoene has argued, '– and, with it everything traditionally construed as or associated with the feminine – poses a continuous subversive threat of emasculation to the heroic athletics of patriarchal masculinity'.[13] The blurring of sexual boundaries finds its culmination in the *raison d'être* of Molloy's story: the quest motif. Yet, Molloy's quest becomes decidedly unmanly when we realize that his quest is to get to his mother, not in order to rescue her, but to rap on her wizened, senile head with his knuckles as a way of asking for money. Early in the narrative, Molloy compares himself to his mother: 'We were so old, she and I, she had had me so young, that we were like a couple of old cronies, sexless' (*ML*, p.17). Later in the narrative, when recounting his bygone experience of 'true love',

Molloy conflates the image of Ruth or Edith with that of his mother (*ML*, pp.56–8). Perhaps more damaging to Molloy's heterosexual normative image is the fact that he cannot now remember if Ruth/Edith was a man or woman. Indeed, how could a *woman* prevent him from continuing the quest to his mother?: 'Molloy, man or woman, what does it matter? But I cannot help asking myself the following question. Could a woman have stopped me as I swept towards mother? Probably. Better still, was such an encounter possible, I mean between me and a woman? Now men, I have rubbed up against a few men in my time, but women?' (*ML*, p.56). The overt homosexual implications of this passage are only a small part of the emasculation of Molloy. As Peter Boxall has argued in 'Beckett and Homoeroticism', Beckett critics always render 'the Beckettian man' 'more or less as straight as ever'.[14] While I agree with Boxall that Beckett criticism has been at best 'don't ask, don't tell', and at worst 'homophobic' (*BH*, p.111), I would argue that the more politically subversive discourse to emerge from this passage is the complete *indifference* that Molloy displays towards heterosexual, normative sexual acts and gender differences. It is one thing to try to live up to a masculine ideal and fall short of it, or actively to revolt against a masculine ideal. It is quite another, however, to show a total indifference to masculinity and normative sexual practices. The apathy Molloy displays with regard to heterosexual masculine norms dismantles the postwar era 'pomophobia' (to evoke the terms of Berthold Schoene's discussion) by refusing to play inside the dialectic of normal versus abnormal. From this short analysis, we can see that Molloy's lack of interest in upholding patriarchal masculinity can be read as more threatening than homosexual or even bisexual behaviour which – however overtly subversive – plays into heterosexual categories of behaviour. Molloy disrupts our ability to read his gender and sexual conduct in predictable ways; this, in turn, challenges our ability to read *at all*.

In terms of style, Deleuze claims in 'The Exhausted' that Beckett's texts go through stylistic stages: '*language I*' – 'atomic disjunctive, cut and chopped language' – is produced in the early texts;[15] '*language II*' – 'a true silence, not a simple tiredness with talking' – is found in the texts of 'voices' (*ECC*, p.156); '*language III*' is the language of the later Beckett texts which creates the 'image' and is 'exhausted' (*ECC*, p.156). Yet '*language III*' blends with '*language I*', '[i]t maintains a relationship with language in its entirety, but rises up or stretches out in its holes, its gaps, or its silences' (*ECC*, p.162). The way that Deleuze characterizes '*language III*' as blended with '*language I*' is, in fact, quite accurate in terms of *Molloy* which would be considered in Deleuze's scheme to be a product of

'*language I*'. To illustrate Beckett's 'style', I shall focus on one passage in *Molloy* which begins when Molloy is hauled into the police station for resting on his chainless bicycle in what the policeman presumes is an indecent or disorderly manner. This first excerpt demonstrates that Molloy has difficulty making sense on the plane of organization; in other words, Molloy's ability to make 'good sense' in the standard language tradition is flawed: he often does not understand at all; sometimes he misunderstands; sometimes his understanding (or misunderstanding) is so delayed that by the time he is able to blurt out a response it has been rendered 'senseless'. In the instances when Molloy does correctly understand and immediately replies, he is still rejected by 'good sense'. In a comical tone, the text stutters, drags, then flies forward as Molloy, resting on his chainless bicycle, is about to be detained by an approaching policeman:

> Thus we cleared these difficult straits, my bicycle and I, together. But a little further on I heard myself hailed. I raised my head and saw a policeman. Elliptically speaking, for it was only later, by way of induction, or deduction, I forget which, that I knew what it was. What are you doing there? he said. I'm used to that question, I understood it immediately. Resting, I said. Resting, he said. Resting, I said. Will you answer my question? he cried. So it always is when I'm reduced to confabulation, I honestly believe I have answered the question I am asked and in reality I do nothing of the kind. (*ML*, p.20)

Even Molloy's repetitive clarification, 'Resting, I said. Resting, he said. Resting, I said', does not produce communication; the policeman denies Molloy's ability to answer with proper sense. What Molloy experiences as 'resting' is not even *recognized* by the policeman as a valid function. 'Elliptically speaking' is an indication in the text that the scene has not been experienced linearly; Molloy's ability to 'make sense' evidences insufficient transitions and illogical connections between thoughts, ideas, expressions, and experiences.

Taken into an office with a plain clothes sergeant, Molloy begins to be questioned. As he states:

> Between his questions and my answers, I mean those deserving of consideration, the intervals were more or less long and turbulent. I am so little used to being asked anything that when I am asked something I take some time to know what. [...] I hasten to answer blindly, fearing perhaps lest my silence fan their anger to fury. I am full of fear, I have gone in fear all of my life, in fear of blows. [...]

> And suddenly I remembered my name, Molloy. My name is Molloy, I cried, all of a sudden, now I remember. Nothing compelled me to give this information, but I gave it, hoping to please I suppose. (*ML*, pp.21–3)

After answering the sergeant's questions, Molloy is placed in a room full of people coming and going; he is propped on his crutches pretending to be 'paying no attention' to the others (*ML*, p.23). 'Suddenly', an overweight woman in 'mauve', whom Molloy later thinks certainly must have been a 'social worker', holds out to Molloy a cup and saucer (*ML*, p.23):

> [. . .] an odd saucer, a mug full of a greyish concoction which must have been green tea [. . .]. Nor was that all, for between mug and saucer a thick slab of dry bread was precariously lodged, so that I began to say, in a kind of anguish, It's going to fall, it's going to fall, as if it mattered whether it fell or not. A moment later I myself was holding, in my trembling hands, this little pile of tottering disparates, in which the hard, the liquid and soft were joined, without understanding how the transfer had been effected. [. . .] The liquid overflowed, the mug rocked with a noise of chattering teeth, not mine, I had none, and the sodden bread sagged more and more. Until, panicstricken, I flung it all far from me. I did not let it fall, no, but with a convulsive thrust of both my hands, I threw it to the ground, where it smashed to smithereens, or against the wall, far from me, with all my strength. (*ML*, pp.23–4)

First, Molloy displays a keen, though odd, sense of his body, balance and proportion. The first sense of the falling cup and saucer when the social worker still holds it, whether 'real' or 'imagined', amounts to the same thing for Molloy; they cause effects in Molloy perhaps disproportionate to their threat, but still quite terrifying for him. Yet, in retrospect, the level of Molloy's narrative recognizes that attention to the teetering cup and saucer is 'minor': 'as if it mattered whether it fell or not'.

In the same way that Charlus only cares for the process of the tirade, not the meaning of his words or the harmful effect they might have, so, too, Molloy finds the actual falling of the cup, saucer, bread and liquid to be more vital than the consequences of their fall. Molloy comprehends the series of mappings that lead to blows and he understands that the precariousness of certain kinds of objects will force the tempo to rapid-fire speeds. In this way, Molloy is becoming imperceptible owing to the

fact that his body is distance without measure – a series of movements in fits and starts that cannot be 'perceived': the lady is holding the cup and saucer, an imperceptible move; Molloy is holding the cup and saucer, an imperceptible move; a registered moment of holding cup and saucer which is beginning to teeter and chatter uncontrollably, an imperceptible move; Molloy throws cup and saucer to the ground or the wall (an imperceptible trajectory) 'where it smashed to smithereens', series of imperceptible moves; Molloy is released from the police station. This is not only a series of stutterings – fits and starts that regulate a series of events – but a stuttering of thought that cannot be adequately accounted for. It is a rupture in 'common sense' that defines becoming-Molloy, that registers the quality of difference between the cup and saucer simply falling, 'I did not let it fall, no', and 'with a convulsive thrust of both my hands, I threw it to the ground'.

Likewise, Charlus 'with a convulsive thrust' of speech enacts difference from a register other than that of rational consequences. Neither Charlus nor Molloy operate in the realm of 'good sense', and, in this way, they open up a new epistemological space in literature. At what level of consciousness Beckett might have been aware of Molloy and his troop of lunatics' likeness to Charlus is impossible to say. What is certain, however, is the sheer coincidence that Deleuze examined Proust and Beckett, supposedly quite different writers, from his own unique philosophic perspective. This, in turn, opens up new avenues of interpretation at both the representational level of masculine counterdiscourse and in term of 'style' by forcing us to think – and read – a new image of thought.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, tr. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p.16. Hereafter referred to as *PS*.
2. Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p.17.
3. Gilles Deleuze, 'On Nietzsche and the Image of Thought', in *Desert Islands and other Texts, 1953–1974*, tr. Michael Taormina (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), [pp. 135–42], p.139.
4. Gilles Deleuze, 'He Stuttered', tr. Constantine Boundas, in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, eds Constantine Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (New York: Routledge, 1994), [pp. 23–33]. Hereafter referred to as *HS*. See also J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962) which was translated by Oswald Ducrot as '*Quand dire c'est faire*' (Paris: Hermann, 1972). In *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin claims that 'it was too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a "statement" can only be to "describe" the state of affairs, or to "state some fact", which it must do either truly or falsely' (p.1). Austin relegates statements that can

be 'true' or 'false' to the realm of *constative* utterances, and it is this sphere of language that we most often inhabit. Constative utterances are everyday statements such as 'it is snowing' or 'she came to my party', statements that describe states of affairs that can be empirically verified (it is snowing; she came to my party; or, it is not snowing; she did not come to my party). For Austin the *performative* performs the deed. The most famous example is the marriage ceremony vow in which the bride and groom are legally bound by the 'I do' they utter during the ceremony.

5. George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.4. Hereafter referred to as *IM*.
6. In their discussion of major and minor languages in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari define the major language tradition in the following terms: 'Majority implies a constant, of expression and content, serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it. Let us suppose that the constant or standard is the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language [...]': Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, tr. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2003), p.105. Hereafter referred to as *TP*.
7. On this question of 'catatonic freezes and extreme velocities', see also *TP*, Chapter 4, 'November 4, 1923 – Postulates of Linguistics', pp.75–110.
8. Lynne Segal, 'Look Back in Anger: Men in the Fifties', in *Gender*, ed. Anna Tripp (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp.72–86 [p.80].
9. Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, tr. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, 6 vols (New York: Vintage, 1982), IV, p.355. Hereafter referred to as *SLT*.
10. Colleen Lamos, *Deviant Modernism: Sexual and Textual Errancy in T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Marcel Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.176.
11. Samuel Beckett, *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (New York: Grove, 1995). *Molloy* is hereafter referred to as *ML*.
12. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (New York: Grove, 1997), p.29a.
13. Berthold Schoene, 'The Union and Jack: British Masculinities, Pomophobia, and the Post-nation', in *Across the Margins: Cultural Identity and Change in the Atlantic Archipelago*, eds Glenda Norquay and Gerry Smyth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p.86.
14. Peter Boxall, 'Beckett and Homoeroticism', in *Palgrave Advances in Samuel Beckett Studies*, ed. Lois Oppenheim (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.111. Hereafter referred to as *BH*.
15. Gilles Deleuze, 'The Exhausted', in tr. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p.156. Hereafter referred to as *ECC*.

14

Coldness and Cruelty as Performance in Deleuze's Proust

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In the context of their discussion of critics' exploration of the homosexual elements of *A la recherche du temps perdu* in their *Anti-Oedipus*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari point out how commonly such critics diagnose 'Oedipal homosexuality with a mother fixation', as well as a 'dominant depressive nature and a sadomasochistic guilt'.[1] The authors are, in my view, correct to distrust such a simplistic reading of Proust. In various ways, both the dark vision of female submission presented in Michael Haneke's film *La Pianiste* (2001) (even darker in Elfriede Jelinek's book *Die Klavierspielerin* upon which the film is based) or the cautiously optimistic view to be found in Steven Shainberg's *Secretary* (2002), suffer from being predicated upon such reductive quasi-Freudian models. Deleuze and Guattari's view, elaborated in their various co-authored books and some of Deleuze's own, resists interpretations of desire as grounded in the actions and histories of particular beings and subjectivities, and thus abstracted from them, in favour of the 'desiring-machine' model, by which desire as an abstract relation precedes its manifestation in particular individuals. I find this model compelling if not entirely sufficient. It provides a radical alternative to Freudian reductiveness which significantly exceeds the partial critical revisions of Freud to be found in the work of Julia Kristeva or Jacques Lacan. As such, it provides a useable framework within which to consider sadomasochism.

For the purposes of this chapter, I seek to elaborate upon the implications of a view of such a desiring-machine *as exists under capitalism*, without seeking to pronounce upon whether such a machinic force would exist, at least in any recognizable form, in pre-capitalist or post-capitalist societies. This would depend upon whether one believes that in order to satisfy the definition of the term, such a machine must have concrete representation at all points in history, or whether it simply needs

to have the potential to exist in some form at some time. This difficult philosophical point is not one I wish to pursue further; for the purposes of this chapter, this historically-specific model of the desiring-machine is appropriate.

Unlike various other searching commentators on Proust's work, including Kristeva, Bataille and Girard, Deleuze does not deal explicitly with sadomasochistic elements in Proust's life or work, yet in many ways some of his observations and interpretations reveal deeper insights into the subject of sadomasochism in general. In this critical reading of Deleuze's Proust, I am not attempting to uncover some more acutely refined and nuanced interpretation of the 'real' Proust. My starting point is a selection of Deleuze's readings of particular aspects of Proust, those particular aspects of his work that are *created* from his perspectives on Proust, in conjunction with some of Deleuze's wider thoughts on sexuality (especially in *Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty*).[2]

Terminology

In order to avoid ambiguity, it is necessary first to clarify some terms:

(a) *Sadism, Masochism* and *Sadomasochism*. Throughout *Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty*, Deleuze is adamant about asserting the utterly different nature of the former two categories, and, as such, rejecting their conflation in the latter, as found above all in Freud.[3] The former terms were first coined by Richard Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing in his *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) – cited by Deleuze in *M*, p.135, n.1 – as generalized instances of the types of behavioural traits articulated in the work of Sade and Sacher-Masoch respectively. Deleuze also points out (*M*, p.13) the unfairness of naming whole sexual inclinations after singular individuals. Both terms have come to attain wider meanings (which I will adopt here), whereby *sadism* denotes the desire to inflict cruelty on another, whereas *masochism* denotes the desire to suffer oneself. Freud claimed that both qualities were often found in the same individuals, thus arguing in essence that both were representations of the same basic impulse. Deleuze is unusual (compared, for example, with Bataille[4] and Kristeva[5]) in making masochism rather than sadism the focus of his attention, and granting it ethical primacy. However, this view does not sit so easily with some of his views on Proust, as will be discussed later.

(b) *Domination* and *Submission*. *Domination* denotes the act of exercising control over another (by various means), and a *dominant* is one who gains satisfaction (sometimes erotic, though not necessarily so) by enacting such control. *Submission* is the act of being controlled by another; one who desires this is a *submissive*. Such control can involve cruelty, though this is by no means a necessary condition – domination can equally often take on a certain paternally-inclined quality. In some sections of contemporary BDSM (see below) subculture, domination and submission (*D/s*) have a specific meaning, referring to a particular type of contractual agreement between parties, whereby the submissive agrees to submit to a set of rules laid down by the dominant, and to accept punishment if these rules are broken, all subject to negotiation and renegotiation of particular limits. However, I will use the terms more broadly to encompass all forms of controlling or controlled behaviour, whether or not outwardly (or even inwardly) agreed to as a voluntary act on the part of the submissive (or, more subtly, by the dominant). Alternative terms for the individuals appertaining to these umbrella categories are simply *top* and *bottom*.

(c) *BDSM – Bondage, Domination, Sadomasochism*. This is a term frequently used by contemporary practitioners (or *players*, as they are often called, whose activities are sometimes called *scening*). I will use the term simply to describe the contemporary field of cultural practices involving domination and submission in the sense I defined above.

Deleuze cites a particular view of the human 'soul' and its journey towards self-realization that is found directly before the 'madeleine' passage in Proust:

> I feel that there is much to be said for the Celtic belief that the souls of those whom we have lost are held captive in some inferior being, in an animal, in a plant, in some inanimate object, and thus effectively lost to us until the day (which to many never comes) when we happen to pass by the tree or to obtain possession of the object which forms their prison. Then they start and tremble, they call us by our name, and as soon as we have recognised their voice the spell is broken. Delivered by us, they have overcome death and return to share our life.[6]

He precedes this by stating: 'The signs emanate from objects which are like boxes or containers. The objects hold a captive soul, the soul of something else which tries to open the lid' (*PS*, p.90). The

impulses that produce the will to domination or submission are, in my opinion, contained within such boxes and containers, and in this way both tendencies can be viewed as manifestations of abstract 'desiring-machines'.

The jealous lover

Deleuze comments in *Proust and Signs* on the detailed treatment of jealousy in Proust:

> The jealous lover develops the possible worlds enclosed within the beloved. The sensitive man liberates the souls implicated in things: somewhat as we see the pieces of Japanese paper flower in the water, expanding or extending, forming blossoms, houses and characters. (*PS*, p.90)

He goes on to develop this into a more comprehensive view of jealousy betokening the will to domination:

> Jealousy is the very delirium of signs. And, in Proust, we shall find the confirmation of a fundamental link between jealousy and homosexuality, though it affords an entirely new interpretation of the latter. Insofar as the beloved contains possible worlds, it is a matter of explicating, of unfolding all these worlds. But precisely because these worlds are made valid only by the beloved's viewpoint of them, which is what determines the way in which they are implicated within the beloved, the lover can never be sufficiently *involved* in these worlds, without being thereby excluded from them as well, since he belongs to them only as a thing seen, hence also as a thing scarcely seen, not remarked, excluded from the superior viewpoint from which the choice is made. (*PS*, pp.138–9)

One may apply this reading of Proust to a wider view of BDSM, seen thus as a *creative* rather than simply 'revealing' form of activity. The mechanisms by which dominant people attract their prey and entice their submission (itself one of their 'possible worlds'), and conversely by which submissive people entice the attention of a dominant (likewise), similarly work through the mechanism of signs – bodily and verbal, sometimes with the aid of external objects, location, smells, or a combination of all of these to create a sense of demeanour and atmosphere. Of course, this is not in essence different from any other form of seduction,

itself a particular instance of domination. However, from the perspective of a fundamental aspect of Proust, it is pointed out most clearly by Adorno: 'Proust knows that there are no human beings in themselves beyond this world of images; that the individual is an abstraction, that its being-for-itself has as little reality as its mere being-for-us, which the vulgar prejudice considers an illusion'.[7] This phenomenon, then, need not and should not be seen as somehow *false* merely by virtue of frequently being the product of conscious intention (and this concurs with Deleuze's comments about how in Proust there are only signs, not facts, as will be discussed in the next section). From this perspective we can view Deleuze's (and Proust's) 'jealous lover' as an especially creative individual, spurred by passion into developing the ecstasies of possibility. As Deleuze puts it in *What is Philosophy?*:

> When Proust seems to be describing jealousy in such minute detail, he is inventing an affect, because he constantly reverses the order in affections presupposed by opinion, according to which jealousy would be an unhappy consequence of love: for him, on the contrary, jealousy is finality, destination; and if we must love, it is so that we can be jealous, jealousy being the meaning of signs – affect as semiology.[8]

The dominant (in which category I include the sadist as a particular type, for the reasons given above) controls (or attempts to control) reactions, desires, emotions, sensations, in a manner akin to a conjurer. At the same time the submissive also controls (consciously and otherwise) in various possible ways, including choosing to engage in such activity in the first place, choosing not to withdraw when such activity is initiated, and deliberately affecting certain types of reactions (blushing, pouting, sulking, cringing, etc.), in order to stimulate the dominant more. One may compare in this context the phenomenon described by Deleuze: 'The masochistic hero appears to be educated and fashioned by the authoritarian woman whereas basically it is he who forms her, dresses her for the part and prompts the harsh words she addresses to him' (*M*, p.22).

Deleuze links such creative play, making use of signs in order to elicit realms of the possible, or perhaps the *latent*, with jealousy and then with homosexuality. Yet the model he presents is more akin to that of the dominant (if not specifically the sadist) than to the masochistic nature.[9] If jealousy is seen as an instance of resentment stemming from individualized alienation, then Deleuze is touching on a category I shall call *alienated sexuality*. Lest one uses the word 'alienation' too casually (and individualistically) in this context, it might be pointed out that the type

of alienation experienced in sexual jealousy may sometimes be considered to have a social basis. Through the lens of his/her own desires, the jealous lover envisages a possible future together with the desired one, itself inevitably a *social* future. How society perceives either individual by virtue of their belonging to a couple may have no impact upon the jealous lover's desires, but this cannot be asserted dogmatically. So, at least as a possibility, one should consider the jealous lover as alienated because their potential rejection by the one they desire, and with whom they wish to be enjoined, betokens a further estrangement from the social position they wish to inhabit. This possibility exceeds the boundaries of the essentially individualistic and biologically determinist model of love and sexuality provided by Freud.

Deleuze states in *Difference and Repetition*:

> There is no love which does not begin with the revelation of a possible world as such, enwound in the other which expresses it. Albertine's face expressed the blending of beach and waves: 'From what unknown world does she distinguish me?' The entire history of that exemplary love is the long explication of the possible worlds expressed by Albertine, which transform her now into a fascinating subject, now into a deceptive object. It is true that the other disposes of a means to endow the possibles that it expresses with reality, independently of the development we cause them to undergo. This means is language. Words offered by the other confer reality on the possible as such; whence the foundation of the lie inscribed within language itself.[10]

In such a situation, as Deleuze implies, the jealous lover, undeterred, seeks to unlock such possibility in the loved one ('the Other *as the expression of a possible world*', *DR*, p.324). This can take two quite distinct forms: in the first case, it is a (possibly coercive) strategy to persuade the loved one to love in return.[11] The second form entails a more extreme ritualization of the jealous lover's alienation, by seeking to make the one who spurns them suffer (notwithstanding the fact that this sequence of events may itself have been willed by the one who rejects the jealous lover).

Signs and role-play

> There is a Proustian vision of the world. It is defined initially by what it excludes: crude matter, mental deliberation; physics, philosophy. Philosophy supposes direct declaration and explicit signification, proceeding from a mind seeking the truth. Physics supposes an

> objective and unambiguous matter subject to the conditions of reality. We are wrong to believe in facts; there are only signs. We are wrong to believe in truth; there are only interpretations. The sign is an ever-equivocal, implicit, and implicated meaning. (*PS*, pp.91–2)
>
> The biologists would be right, if they knew that bodies in themselves are already a language. The linguists would be right if they knew that language is always the language of bodies. Every symptom is a word, but first of all every word is a symptom. (*PS*, p.92)

The primacy of the sign elucidated above by Deleuze links directly with what is commonly known among BDSM practitioners as *role-play*. This is, very simply, a form of practice where the players inhabit particular 'roles'. These are often based upon social archetypes (teachers, pupils, police, law-breakers, family figures, etc.) seen as distinct from their more usual outward personae. In interactive role-play, a primary motivation is the sense of what one's role signifies to the other player or players, how these signs might stimulate certain types of reactions which in turn suggest various responses, all consistent with the 'role'. A section from Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, expanding a paradigm from Proust, encapsulates the relationship between the 'role' (if seen as an instance of the 'virtual') and the 'actual':

> The virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual. *The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual*. Exactly what Proust said of states of resonance must be said of the virtual: 'Real without being actual, ideal without being abstract'; and symbolic without being fictional. Indeed, the virtual must be defined as strictly a part of the real object – as though the object had one part of itself in the virtual into which it plunges as though into an objective dimension. (*DR*, p.260)

What is signified by the role being played is indeed 'symbolic without being fictional'; the notion of the real excluding the virtual in terms of human behaviour is only possible for one living the hermit-like existence (the myth of 'being-for-itself' as described above by Adorno). Yet disdain for role-play from some quarters is predicated upon such mythical notions of authenticity; such activity is viewed as frivolous and unbefitting of passionate, emotionally engaged, adult human beings for such a reason. But while the surface effect may seem frivolous (as could equally be said of the charming but openly posturing seducer), a deep-seated craving to act in such a manner may not be. Asocial notions of 'authentic' identity deny the value or importance of human

interactions in a semiotic manner, the ways in which humans discover, develop and *construct themselves* through their interactions with others; in a word, the essential role of the *performative* in dynamic social identity, which in this context corresponds to Deleuze's 'virtual'. Seen this way, role-play is not an appendage to human existence, but constitutes a fundamental component of it.

Those who engage deliberately in role-play are merely exploiting the fact that bodies in themselves are already a language. More unthinking forms of demeanour equally exhibit signifying connotations: Mme Verdurin, through her 'gestures, her fear that her jaw will come unhinged, her artistic posturings that resemble those of sleep, her medicated nose', all of which 'constitute an alphabet for the initiated' (*PS*, p.93), inhabits the latter realm, as her 'posturings' signify in a manner different from that intended. An equivalent situation applies to forms of dress. It may be common to label as 'false' one who dresses in order deliberately to signify something to others, to create a particular type of response. This criticism is relatively meaningless unless one believes that the only 'true' state of dress is nakedness, which of course itself also cannot help but signify in a cultural context (as, sometimes acutely so, can partial rather than complete undress, a situation frequently exploited in fetish wear).

Deleuze and Guattari encapsulate the fluid nature of being and the primacy of sexual becoming most compellingly in the following passage from *A Thousand Plateaus*:

> Knowing how to age does not mean remaining young: it means extracting from one's age the particles, the speeds and slownesses, the flows that constitute the youth of *that* age. Knowing how to love does not mean remaining a man or a woman; it means extracting from one's sex the particles, the speeds and slownesses, the flows, the *n* sexes that constitute the girl of *that* sexuality. It is Age itself that is a becoming-child, just as Sexuality, any sexuality, is a becoming-woman, in other words, a girl. This by way of response to the stupid question, Why did Proust make Albert Albertine?[12]

The implicit equation that the authors make between sexuality and the feminine (and indeed the conflation of youth with becoming) is perhaps rather facile, but the flexibility and performative attributes which they associate with sexuality might also be used to answer the question 'Why does one role-play'? To do so is to control one's sexuality as a signifying

process, to affect the reactions it engenders in others and, as such, to use it to one's advantage.

Non-fascist life?

Some of Deleuze and Guattari's most radical ideas on the relationship between the individual and society are to be found in one of the discussions of Proust in *Anti-Oedipus*:

> For the rigors of the law are only an apparent repression of the protest of the One, whereas their real object is the absolution of fragmented universes, in which the law never unites anything in a single Whole, but on the contrary measures and maps out the divergences, the dispersions, the exploding into fragments of something that is innocent precisely because its source is madness. (*AO*, p.43)[13]

The similarity between this formation and Adorno's negative dialectics[14] is made even more palpable in what follows:

> This is why in Proust's work the apparent theme of guilt is tightly interwoven with a completely different theme totally contradicting it; the plantlike innocence that results from the total compartmentalization of the sexes, both in Charlus's encounters and in Albertine's lumber, where flowers blossom in profusion and the utter innocence of madness is revealed, whether it be the patent madness of Charlus of the supposed madness of Albertine. (*AO*, p.43)

Both Adorno and Deleuze/Guattari are here in danger of succumbing to a romanticized view of madness that can descend into the seductive and perversely 'easy' world of misanthropic nihilism as an alternative to meaningful social (and political) engagement.[15] This view must be considered most seriously in the context of the ethics of sexualized activity involving cruelty, for if such cruelty is simply allowed free rein, untethered by the law, what is to stop it finding expression in a society built upon neo-Darwinian ruthlessness, entailing the downtreading of the weak or disadvantaged, in a manner akin to aspects of fascism? Adorno, as an implacable ideological opponent of neo-primitivism, would of course have no time for romanticization of the 'natural'; the types of ultimate aporias he locates psychologically in the contemporary human subject are to him simply an outgrowth of such a subject's alienated situation in late capitalist society.

Deleuze and Guattari's Proust-influenced view is rather less clear in this respect and demonstrates some questionable liberal, individualistic, tendencies. The 'utter innocence of madness' takes on a much darker tinge when one realizes such a concept must by definition also incorporate the madness of a serial killer who feels unavoidably drawn by inner demons beyond their control to murder and mutilate young women, for example. It is not impossible that such urges might in some sense resonate with such an individual's sense of alienation from 'the rigors of the law' and 'the apparent repression of the protest of the One' in more generalized senses, which become manifested in a horrifically hyperbolized form. However, there seems little will or effort on the part of Deleuze and Guattari to deal with this type of phenomenon.

Proust himself describes a stark opposition between kindness and desire as follows:

> The reader will observe that, after an interpolation of common parlance, M. de Charlus had suddenly become once more as precious and haughty in his speech as he normally was. The idea of Morel's 'ditching' without compunction a girl whom he had outraged had enabled him to enjoy an abrupt and consummate pleasure. From that moment his sensual appetites were satisfied for a time and the sadist (a true medium, he) who had for a few moments taken the place of M. de Charlus had fled, handing over to the real M. de Charlus, full of artistic refinement, sensibility and kindness.[16]

If such a 'consummate pleasure' is inevitably predicated upon another's suffering, if pleasure of this type is inextricably linked to cruelty, then the implications could be extremely stark and potentially barbarous, notwithstanding the relative innocuousness of the particular example given. Yet one of Deleuze and Guattari's Nietzsche-inspired formulations provide a partial way out from this problem:

> Cruelty has nothing to do with some ill-defined or natural violence that might be commissioned to explain the history of mankind; cruelty is the movement of culture that is realized in bodies and inscribed on them, belabouring them. That is what cruelty means. This culture is not the movement of ideology: on the contrary, it forcibly injects production into desire, and conversely, it forcibly inserts desire into social production and reproduction. For even death, punishment, and torture are desired, and are instances of production (compare the history of fatalism). It makes men or their organs into the parts and wheels of the social machine. (*AO*, p.145)

This passage comes in the context of a critical reading of the history of capitalism. Deleuze and Guattari do not seem prepared to accept the more obvious forms of cruelty simply as an aberration in the manner espoused by Girard.[17] However, if one takes a classic Marxist view of capitalism and the cultural processes thus engendered as an inevitable and necessary historical stage (a necessary position if opposition to capitalism is not to lapse into nostalgia, neo-primitivism and the like), then it is possible to modify this view of cruelty into a form workable for a socialist or simply a humanitarian. Desire and production (or rather production as one possible territorialization of the Deleuzian desiring-machine) may be inseparable under capitalism. As such, cruel urges as a by-product of the will-to-production may be an inevitable consequence of capitalist society. This is a diagnosis rather than a celebration; it could be argued that its realization constitutes a primary motivator towards finding a way of dealing with such a phenomenon, while avoiding a descent into barbarism when the prospect of socialist transformation remains remote.

Proust's elucidation of the distinction between the 'sensual' and the 'real' Charlus given above also provides a key in this respect. If the two categories are recognized as antagonistic, in keeping with the 'alienated sexuality' described earlier, then a natural response is to insist on their separation. This is best achieved by an insistence upon a progressive ethical and political outlook as a necessary accompaniment to a recognition of the often irrational and amoral nature of sexuality. Sexual desire would thus be allowed free rein in controlled conditions providing it constituted a realm of activity kept separate from the rest of one's interactions with others. In Proust's description of Mlle Vinteuil's actions and motivations when desecrating the photograph of her late father, he simultaneously illuminates the potency of desire as the flipside of ethical practice and renders the former within the realms of the performative:

> A sadist of her kind is an artist in evil, which a wholly wicked person could not be, for in that case the evil would not have been external, it would have seemed quite natural to her, and would not even have been distinguishable from herself [...]. Sadists of Mlle Vinteuil's sort are creatures so purely sentimental, so naturally virtuous, that even sensual pleasure appears to them as something bad, the prerogative of the wicked. And when they allow themselves for a moment to enjoy it they endeavour to impersonate, to identify with, the wicked, and to make their partners do likewise, in order to gain the momentary

> illusion of having escaped beyond the control of their own gentle and scrupulous natures into the inhuman world of pleasure. (*RTP*, I, p.179)

However, Proust's rather disparaging tone with respect to the 'purely sentimental' and the 'naturally virtuous' would seem to allow little place for ethics, even virtue, as positive entities; thus Proust himself succumbs to the type of selfish liberal individualism that cannot be entirely separated from Nietzsche. If both Proust and his characters had inhabited a period a few decades later, and Mlle Vinteuil's father had perished in a Nazi concentration camp, the erotic charge of desecrating his memory might not necessarily lose its potency (indeed, the extremity of the taboo might conceivably increase it), but the ethical implications of such an act would accrue more serious implications. To respect his memory would then be much more than simply a 'gentle and scrupulous nature'; it would be seen as a moral imperative.

Yet, in light of the fact that the ultimate taboo of role-playing within the realms of the most hideous barbarism known to man has been shown to have a charge of itself (as witnessed in the adoption of Nazi icons in some of the punk movement) as much as a statement of anti-normative subversion as any particular ideological identification with fascism,[18] and with great frequency within the BDSM movement, then one must also consider seriously the possibility of desire working at cross-purposes not simply with bourgeois morality but also against a form of ethics that all but an ideologically-committed neo-Nazi would accept. Put starkly, can desire rooted in cruelty be in any way reconciled with 'non-fascist life', to use part of the alternative title (*Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life*) provided by Michel Foucault for *Anti-Oedipus* (*AO*, p.xiii)? Foucault asserts that:

> Last but not least, the major enemy, the strategic adversary is fascism (whereas *Anti-Oedipus*' opposition to the others is more of a tactical engagement). And not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini – which was able to mobilize and use the desire of the masses so effectively – but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us. (*AO*, p.xiii)

Among Foucault's ensuing prescriptions, his injunction 'Do not become enamored of power' (*AO*, p.xiv) might be reshaped, in the context of BDSM-related desire, as 'Do not necessarily assign a rational or ethical

basis to that of which one is enamoured, and which relates to power', thus insisting once again on the non-simultaneity of desire and rational and ethical concerns. Proust's Charlus is indeed enamoured of power, but does not submit to it:

> Now in him pleasure was not unaccompanied by a certain idea of cruelty of which I had not at that time learned the full force: the man whom he loved appeared to him in the guise of a delightful torturer. In taking sides against the Germans he would have seemed to himself to be acting as he did only in his hours of physical pleasure, to be acting, that is, in a manner contrary to his merciful nature, fired with passion for seductive evil and helping to crush virtuous ugliness. (*RTP*, III, pp.801–2)

There is no sense of righteousness, no ethical justification, underlying Charlus's desires here, just simple disdain for virtue and a wish to desecrate it. Charlus here, as clearly as anywhere, has succeeded in divorcing desire and ethics, rendering cruelty into the realms of pure 'physical pleasure' in a way that is distinguishable from ideological militarism or nationalistic self-righteousness. There is nothing inherently quasi-fascistic about his thoughts for this very reason. Similarly, some of those who adopt fascist iconography, costume or demeanour may at best be those most cognizant of the fact that the pull of power *is on the level of desire*, which is nothing if not *aesthetic*.

This must, however, be contrasted with the antithetical argument, by which the legitimization of such sexualized practices itself legitimizes other forms of fascist politics and behaviour. Deleuze's thoughts on the underdetermination of masks provides a way out from this dichotomy:

> Repetition is truly that which disguises itself in constituting itself, that which constitutes itself only by disguising itself. It is not underneath the masks, but is formed from one mask to another, as though from one distinctive point to another, from one privileged instant to another, with and within the variations. The masks do not hide anything except other masks. There is no first term which is repeated, and even our childhood love for the mother repeats other adult loves with regard to other women, rather like the way in which the hero of *In Search of Lost Time*, replays with his mother Swann's passion for Odette. There is nothing repeated which may be isolated or abstracted from the repetition in which it was formed, but in which it is also hidden. There is no bare repetition which may be abstracted

> or inferred from the disguise itself. The same thing is both disguising and disguised. (*DR*, p.19)

Neither the sexualization of power in a strictly erotic arena or as a form of consenting recreational activity, nor actual fascism as a political force and means of coercive behaviour in economic life, should be seen as a bare repetition of the other; rather, both are masks, both are 'both disguising and disguised' forms of the same abstract (if historically determined) desiring-machine. Deleuze's view of difference and repetition can in this manner provide a route beyond the psychological reductiveness of many neo-Freudian views of BDSM. Exploration of power-based desire can also be a means of illuminating the attributes and implications of such forces when they are known to exist in individuals, which might otherwise escape cognition if allowed to proceed in the distorted and part-repressed form they might otherwise take in ordinary reality.

If an ethical framework for BDSM-related consciousness and activity is required, this would not necessarily correspond to the 'justification for masochistic behavior in the most varied motivations or in the demands of fateful and agonizing situations' that Deleuze finds in Sacher-Masoch (*M*, p.26) but which he finds lacking in Sade. On the other hand, within a framework which interpreted BDSM as an expression of alienated desire under capitalism, the positing of utopian notions of how desire might manifest itself in a post-capitalist world, let alone the implication that it would take a perfectly egalitarian form, would be relatively meaningless. Whether Proust himself, in terms of his life and his work, may be cited as an example of 'non-fascist living', is debatable. The questions of his possible snobbery are too complex to deal with adequately here, but to absolve Proust of all such charges would be rash; one might also consider the apparent anti-humanism expressed through his portrayals of others.[19] However, Proust's relatively democratic views on artistic possibility, by which most individuals are capable of producing art by transforming life's experiences may serve as a mitigating factor.

Moreover, Proust's presentations of BDSM-related desire do not conflate it with ethics but render it within the realms of the performative, albeit somewhat lacking in a wider and meaningful ethical framework. Brought together with aspects of Deleuze's extrapolation of wider conceptions of jealousy, the inhabiting of roles and an anti-ontological view of desire as a manifestation of an abstracted creative force, it becomes possible to arrive at a theoretical explanation for the obstinate presence of taboo desire in contemporary society. The second half of Julia Kristeva's comment that 'The sado-masochism of *Sodom and Gomorrah*

is the truth underlying eroticism and feeling and, on a deeper level, sado-masochism is the very bond that brings society together'[20] is hyperbolic if read more broadly than in terms of sexuality alone. Nonetheless, both Proust and Deleuze go part of the way towards offering the possibility of a nuanced modification: that creative sadomasochism might be understood as a means of preventing society's lapse into barbarism.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, tr. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p.68. Hereafter referred to as *AO*.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty*, tr. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1989), pp.9–138. Hereafter referred to as *M*.
3. See, for example, relevant passages in Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, tr. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1973); *On Sexuality*, tr. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1977); *On Psychopathology*, tr. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1979); *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, tr. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1984); *Civilization, Society and Religion*, tr. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1985).
4. See Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*, Vols. II and III, tr. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1991). Hereafter referred to as *AS*.
5. Julia Kristeva, 'Sadisme', in *Dictionnaire Marcel Proust*, eds Annick Bouillaguet and Brian G. Rogers (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004).
6. Marcel Proust, Vol. I, p.49, cited in Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, tr. Richard Howard (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p.90. Hereafter referred to as *PS*.
7. Theodor Adorno, 'Short Commentaries on Proust', in *Notes to Literature*, Vol. I, tr. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp.174–84 [p.177].
8. Gilles Deleuze, *What is Philosophy?*, tr. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), p.175.
9. Cp. René Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, tr. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), pp.176–92, for a particular view of masochism (with examples from Proust) that links such an impulse to covetousness and Christian morality.
10. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, tr. Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), p.324. Hereafter referred to as *DR*. See also, for a useful summary of Deleuze's concept of 'faciality', Adrian Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp.96–98.
11. See, for example, Pedro Almodovar's 1990 film *¡Átame!* (known in English as *Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down*).
12. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, tr. Brian Massumi (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), pp.305–6.
13. Cp. also *PS*, pp.131–3.

14. See, for example, Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, tr. E.B. Ashton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).
15. Compare with the starker opposition presented by Georges Bataille in *AS*, p.191.
16. Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, tr. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (London: Penguin, 1983), Vol. II, p.1042. Hereafter referred to as *RTP*.
17. See, for example: 'Social coexistence would be impossible if no surrogate victim existed, if violence persisted beyond a certain threshold and failed to be transmuted into culture', René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, tr. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p.144.
18. See Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), on the use of the swastika.
19. Many of the characters in *A la recherche*, as Margaret Topping points out elsewhere in this volume, are portrayed by a knowing narrator as if 'puppets', with little conscious will of their own.
20. Julia Kristeva, *Proust and the Sense of Time*, tr. Stephen Bann (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p.13.

15

Proustian Puppetry as Deleuzian Sign in *A la recherche du temps perdu*

Margaret Topping

Deleuze's *Proust et les signes* draws to a close with the search for a metaphor to express the construction of Proust's novel. The *Recherche*, he concludes, 'n'est pas bâtie comme une cathédrale ni comme une robe' ['The Search is not constructed like a cathedral or like a gown'], despite the visual aptness of both of these images to Deleuze's interpretation of the novel as a whole revealing the seams that link the fragments of its construction, at once unity and multiplicity.[1] No, the *Recherche* is not constructed as architecture or couture, 'mais comme une toile' (*PS*, p.218) ['but like a web' (*PSa*, p.182)]. Deleuze continues:

> Le Narrateur-araignée, dont la toile même est la Recherche en train de se faire, de se tisser avec chaque fil remué par tel ou tel signe: la toile et l'araignée, la toile et le corps sont une seule et même machine [...]. C'est ce corps-toile-araignée qui s'agite pour s'entrouvrir ou pour fermer chacune des petites boîtes qui viennent heurter un fil gluant de la Recherche. Etrange plasticité du Narrateur, C'est ce corps-araignée du Narrateur, l'espion, le policier, le jaloux, l'interprète et le revendicateur – le fou – l'universel schizophrène qui va tendre un fil vers Charlus le paranoïaque, un autre fil vers Albertine l'érotomane, pour en faire autant de marionnettes de son propre délire, autant de puissances intensives de son corps sans organes, autant de profils de sa folie. (*PS*, pp.218–19)
>
> [The Narrator-spider, whose very web is the *Search* creating itself, spinning itself, its every thread stirred by some sign or other: the web and the spider, the web and the body are one and the same machine [...]. It is this body-web-spider that shifts around to half-open or to close each of the little boxes which collide with one of the sticky threads of the *Search*. The Narrator is endowed with a

> strange plasticity. It is this body-spider of the Narrator, the spy, the detective, the jealous man, the interpreter, the maker of demands – the madman – the universal schizophrenic who is going to reach out one thread towards Charlus the paranoiac, another towards Albertine the erotomaniac, to make of them so many marionettes of his own delirium, so many intensive forces of his body without organs, so many profiles of his own madness (my translation)].

The spider and web, narrator and text, narrator and characters are placed in a relationship of co-existent sameness and difference. As 'marionnettes de son propre délire' [marionettes of his own delirium], characters such as Albertine and Charlus are both enmeshed in, or controlled by, the textual web and inseparable from the spider-narrator; they are both puppets within the narrative and projections, potential or actual, of the narrator's imagination and/or identity. This dual analogy – which posits the novel as a spider's web and its characters as marionettes 'dancing' on its threads as in a puppet theatre – is certainly a suggestive one, not least because the image that transforms characters in the *Recherche* into marionettes is not Deleuze's alone, but also Proust's own.[2] The metaphor of puppet theatre in the *Recherche* charts the hero's apprenticeship to worldly signs, to borrow Deleuze's terms. By means of a series of repetitions, it charts the path from misinterpretation to explication, from time wasted to time regained.[3] At first endowed with a literal presence in the text, puppet theatre is a worldly sign that the 'hero' – Deleuze's term for the intradiegetical protagonist – encounters and misreads. The erroneous meanings he extracts from it are subsequently imposed on the social world, as metaphor, by the hero himself. By the end of his apprenticeship to signs, however, these are reinterpreted by the intelligence. There then begins, for the narrator seeking the generality of worldly laws and for the would-be creator scrutinizing these signs in which 'truth' betrays itself, a process of descending back down through the spiral of worldly signs emitted by puppet theatre along the different lines of time in the narrator's experience. Only then can their essence be revealed in the work of art. 'Non pas que nous retournions dans la vie, dans l'amour, dans la mondanité', argues Deleuze, 'mais nous redescendons la série du temps en assignant à chaque ligne temporelle, et à chaque espèce de signes, la vérité qui leur est propre' (*PS*, p.106) ['Not that we would go back into life, into love, into worldliness, but we redescend the series of time by assigning to each temporal line, and to each species of signs, the truth appropriate to them' (*PSa*, pp.88–9)]. Ultimately, too, the reader must redescend this spiral: in retrospect, we

discover that the truth/the law was present in the imagery of puppet theatre from the outset, that the creator's metaphors were already insinuating the erroneousness of the hero's reading of this worldly sign. The wasted time of worldly signs and the time regained of art are thus overlaid in metaphor.

This chapter aims to chart the progression of Proust's 'hero' from worldly signs to the signs of art. In so doing, it will also draw out preoccupations common to Proust, Deleuze, and, indeed (as briefly evoked in my reflection on Kleist's essay on the marionette theatre), Beckett, with questions of agency and subjecthood, ritual and spontaneity, beauty and mechanical reproduction. Ultimately, too, it will speculate that Deleuze's conception of worldly signs may itself owe something to Proustian puppetry, given that this latter provides such an archetypal metaphor for the philosopher's characterization of worldly signs as signifying void.

Deleuze introduces the model of repetitions in relation to the interpretation of the signs of *love* rather than of worldly signs. Confronted with the signs of love, *sensibility* is the constraint that propels the intelligence to do the work out of which laws will ultimately emerge. This emotional engagement and suffering are replaced, by Deleuze, with exaltation as the motor for interpreting the increasingly comic potency of the worldly signs that bombard the hero and reader, exciting the intelligence and demanding interpretation. Mme Verdurin's pantomime of laughter in 'Un amour de Swann' ['Swann in Love'] immediately springs to mind. It reaches its crescendo with an ironic figure that, in its context, fittingly implies both negation and void, namely the oxymoron of her 'sanglot[ant] d'amabilité' ['sob[bing] with affability'].[4] One recalls also the storm-tossed sea of Legrandin's rippling 'croupe' ['behind'] when, unaware of the narrator's gaze, he makes his obsequious bow to a local *châtelaine* in Combray (*RTP*, I, p.123); and, of course, these are both virtuoso pieces of comic writing. But elsewhere, sensibility drives the hero's need to interpret *worldly* signs as much as those of love. An anguished sensitivity to his internality/externality to social groups thus delivers at least some worldly signs from the realms of the frivolous or comic. Moreover, as René Girard argues, social and sexual desire in Proust are essentially the same forces, as their common intertwining with the world of puppet theatre in the novel would seem to underline.[5] Indeed, the first introduction of puppetry in the *Recherche* appears in the context of desire. What I shall argue here, therefore, is that, through a series of repetitions, each characterized – to use Deleuze's terms – by minor differences and contrasting relationships, the law of generality of the group may also be attained.

The first indication, for the infatuated, young hero, of Gilberte's arrival at the Champs-Elysées is the feather on her nanny's hat which he can just make out 'entre le guignol et le cirque' (*RTP*, I, p. 391) ['between the puppet theatre and the circus' (*SLT*, I, p.401)]. Here, the 'guignol' ['puppet theatre'] is not yet a metaphor; like the circus that is geographically and conceptually contiguous to it; it is a part of the social world which itself emits signs for interpretation. At this early stage in his apprenticeship, however, the hero yields to the seductions of both an objectivist and subjectivist reading of these signs. The introduction of the 'guignol' as one object of his gaze underlines the focus of his attention at this stage: between circus and puppet show is the symbol of Gilberte's imminent arrival, between a choice of light-hearted entertainments lies desire. As Deleuze argues, the first experience of the worldly sign is inevitably that of inexperience. In the interweaving of puppet theatre with the circus and with Gilberte, therefore – which is also the interweaving of social diversion and sexual desire – the signs of puppet theatre are here interpreted by the hero as signs of pleasure, escapism and a lack of responsibility. The meanings the hero absorbs from the worldly sign of puppet theatre thus fail to 'dépass[er] pas moins les états de la subjectivité que les propriétés de l'objet' (*PS*, p.48) ['transcend the states of subjectivity no less than the properties of the object' (*PSa*, p.38)]. It is none the less these meanings that he subtly confers, above all, onto the aristocratic world of the Guermantes when the idealizing prism of his transformative vision subsequently turns their world into a puppet theatre. What he does not yet see, of course, is that the traditions of neither puppet theatre nor circus are free from pain, violence, or, indeed, scenarios which, while rendered humorous through exaggeration and caricature, are rooted in sadomasochistic impulses: babies thrown out of windows, wife-beating and hangings are stock events in the Punch and Judy show, for example, while the clowns' performance in the circus is based on comic injury and misfortune. Moreover, each of these fora of entertainment replays a limited number of set pieces. The meanings implicated in the signs they emit – which also, tellingly, overlap with the world of love and its signs – thus centre on artifice, mechanical repetition, imitation, superficiality and levity, but also cruelty and pain. The two worlds of society and love thus become intersecting threads in the spider's web, with puppet theatre providing the point of intersection. This early evocation of 'le guignol' already contains within it the laws of both worlds: like their repeated re-enactment of the same dramas, each of the hero's amorous affairs is grounded in recurrent patterns of obsession and jealousy and, in each, the same dialogues are constantly replayed. As we shall see, a

similar pattern dominates the social world. But the hero's apprenticeship has only just begun, and it is a fragmentary understanding of this sign that he carries forward into the puppet theatre that he enters in *Le Côté de Guermantes*.

The stars of a tradition claiming no literary value and characterized by its 'elemental appeal',[6] Punch and Judy are the undisputed 'down-and-outs' of the artistic hierarchy. As such, they arguably provide a fitting metaphorical source to embody the lowest level in Deleuze's 'hierarchy' of signs, but at first glance an incongruous metaphorical incarnation for those that occupy the highest rung on the social ladder. But this surface incongruity is gradually resolved in the course of the narrator's apprenticeship. Indeed, the metaphor comes to seem curiously apt in the creator's hands, as the true meaning of the signs emitted by this aristocratic puppet theatre is gradually revealed.

The first 'repetition' of the hero's encounter with a – now metaphorical – puppet theatre is also his first attendance at a dinner party hosted by the duc and duchesse de Guermantes. The hero himself imagines that he is transported into a puppet theatre: 'd'autres portes s'ouvrirent par où entra la soupe fumante, comme si le dîner avait lieu dans un théâtre de puppazi habilement machiné et où l'arrivée tardive du jeune invité [le narrateur] mettait, sur un signe du maître, tous les rouages en action' (*RTP*, II, p.727) ['other doors swung open to admit the steaming soup, as though the dinner were taking place in an artfully contrived puppet-theatre, where, at a signal from the puppet-master, the late arrival of the young guest [the narrator who has been admiring the Guermantes' Elstirs] set all the machinery in motion' (*SLT*, III, p.432)]. On the surface, and to the apprentice-hero who is as yet an immature interpreter of signs, the analogy attests to the harmony and – as if automated – fluidity with which dinner is served. Worldly signs may, as Deleuze argues, be empty, but this in itself 'leur confère une perfection rituelle, comme un formalisme qu'on ne retrouvera pas ailleurs' (*PS*, p.11) ['confers upon them a ritual perfection, a kind of formalism we do not encounter elsewhere' (*PSa*, p.7)]. Indeed, the hero here shares Kleist's view of the beauty of puppet theatre, this latter identifying its grace – significantly when considered in relation to the narrator's worship of the Guermantes – as a characteristic present in purest form only in puppets or gods.[7] Reading the narrator's perception of this aristocratic puppet show through the filter of Kleist's essay – an essay admired by Beckett in whose *Trilogy* puppetry also becomes a recurrent motif[8] – none the less introduces an ironic undercurrent into the analogy, for Kleist does not initially appreciate the origins of this grace and is reliant for an explanation on the Mr C. with

whom his dialogue concerning the marionette theatre takes place: Mr C. explains that it is precisely the puppets' soullessness that ensures their grace. Like Kleist at the beginning of his conversation with Mr C., the narrator/protagonist does not yet appreciate the origins of the beauty of the spectacle played out before him. He gradually becomes aware of the soullessness of their mechanical repetitions, as reflected in the progressive mutation of Kleist's celebratory vision into a perspective more akin to that of Bergson's evocation of puppetry, discussed below.[9]

However, the analogy's participation in the broader network of metaphorical references to the world of puppet theatre – references within which lie latent the comprehension of laws, the understanding of repetitions – also infuses it with a double-edged, ironic undercurrent. It may be the duc de Guermantes who sets this 'vaste, ingénieuse, obéissante et fastueuse horlogerie mécanique et humaine' (*RTP*, II, p.727) ['vast, ingenious, obedient and sumptuous human clockwork' (*SLT*, III, p.432)] in motion, but he is no less a puppet in the show being staged for the young hero. Moreover, the image reduces the dinner to just one in a series of oft-repeated set pieces performed by a relatively limited cast of set characters. After all, the Punch and Judy show and its European counterparts present stock types, rather than individual characterization and, because of their historical reliance on passing trade, contained no 'subtlety of incident' and no plot, dependent, in fact, on a succession of familiar encounters rather than any cause and effect sequence (*PJ*, p.78).[10]

The fluid rhythms of this 'performance' is placed in stark contrast to the hero's earlier vision of the minor noble, Mme de Cambremer's zealous but caricatured imitation of Mme de Guermantes's style. This grants her the unfortunate appearance of 'quelque pensionnaire provinciale, montée sur fil de fer, droite, sèche et pointue, un plumet de corbillard verticalement dressé dans les cheveux' (*RTP*, II, p.354) ['some provincial schoolgirl mounted on wires, rigid, desiccated and crabby, with a plume of feathers from some funeral procession stuck vertically in her hair' (*SLT*, III, p.52)]. All of the elements in this 'portrait', from the emphasis on vertical lines of composition to the repeated suggestions of rigidity, oppose the Guermantes' harmonious movements to her tacitly suggested unnatural spasms. Yet the common image of puppet theatre draws a transversal line between them and, in so doing, reveals a truth: just as Mme de Cambremer's slavish but ineffective emulation of Mme de Guermantes betrays an absence of independent thought and will – if she is 'montée sur fil de fer' ['mounted on wires'], her actions are determined by the puppeteer – so too do the Guermantes follow a mechanical

ritual to which a reading of Bergson's essay on *Le Rire* [*Laughter*] adds a subtle humour. Bergson argues that laughter occurs when the flexibility and purposefulness of human actions are replaced by seemingly mechanical forces. Repetitive speech or behaviour is a further form of mechanistic, and therefore comic, behaviour, in describing which Bergson significantly uses the image of 'le pantin à ficelles' ['string puppet']. He comments:

> Tout le sérieux de la vie lui vient de notre liberté. Les sentiments que nous avons mûris, les passions que nous avons couvées, les actions que nous avons délibérées, arrêtées, exécutées, enfin ce qui vient de nous et ce qui est bien nôtre, voilà ce qui donne à la vie son allure quelquefois dramatique et généralement grave. Que faudrait-il pour transformer tout cela en comédie? Il faudrait se figurer que la liberté apparente recouvre un jeu de ficelles, et que nous sommes ici-bas, comme dit le poète, '. . . d'humbles marionnettes / Dont le fil est aux mains de la Nécessité'.[11]
>
> [All that is serious in life comes from our freedom. The feelings we have matured, the passions we have brooded over, the actions we have weighed, decided upon, and carried through, in short, all that comes from us and is our very own, these are the things that give life its oft-times dramatic and generally grave aspect. What, then, is requisite to transform all this into a comedy? Merely to fancy that our seeming freedom conceals the strings of a dancing-Jack, and that we are, as the poet says, '. . . humble marionettes / The wires of which are pulled by Fate'.]

Moreover, this transversal line offers the proleptic hint, to the reader, of the mature interpreter of signs' discovery of the mental family to which each of these puppets belong, a family defined not by caste, but, as Deleuze proposes, by their concealed intellectual affinities, their common ideas and values.[12] It further heralds the dissolution of social boundaries in *Le Temps retrouvé* [*Time Regained*]. For the moment, however, the apprentice can see only contrast.

The distance between time wasted and time regained is at its widest in the hero's early perspective on the Guermantes, for if the work of art of the mature interpreter of signs effects an ironic debunking of these gods of the aristocratic world, the hero, wasting his time, has stepped resolutely inside this puppet theatre, and not as a spectator but an 'actor'. From a distant view of the frivolous worlds of circus and 'guignol', he has first assumed the role of spectator, as symbolized by his scrutiny of Mme

de Cambremer-as-puppet, finally himself to assume the role of one of its characters. As in the image with which I began – an image identifying the novel's characters as marionettes of the narrator's own delirium – self and other coalesce. His consequent deafness to all but the distractions of society, above all in *Le Côté de Guermantes* [*The Guermantes Way*], finds its striking echo in the suggestive interplay of silence and chatter that marks his attempts to speak to his grandmother on the telephone from Doncières. On first picking up the receiver, he finds that someone else is on the line: 'quand j'amenai à moi le récepteur, ce morceau de bois se mit à parler comme Polichinelle; je le fis taire, ainsi qu'au guignol, en le remettant à sa place, mais, comme Polichinelle, dès que je le ramenais près de moi, il recommençait son bavardage' (*RTP*, II, p.433) ['as I took the receiver, the dead piece of wood began to speak like Punchinello; I silenced it, as I would a puppet, by putting it back on its hook, but, like Punchinello, as soon as I picked it up again, it went on with its chatter' (*SLT*, III, p.131)]. The unsettling ambivalence that is built into the Punch and Judy tradition – a comic, childhood entertainment dramatizing violence and threat – reasserts itself here, ultimately reaching a crescendo in the hero's anticipation of his grandmother's inevitable death and his hurried return to Paris to be with her.[13] However, as the image suggests, while he may be fired with aspirations and resolutions when in physical or emotional proximity to his grandmother, her voice is otherwise supplanted by that of Punchinello and his 'bavardage' ['chatter']. The trivial chatter with which the hero is surrounded in society and to which he too risks succumbing, further highlighted in an image which combines the animate and the inanimate to convey an impression of soullessness and materiality that is far from the spiritualized essence of the world of art: the society that distracts the narrator from more fruitful pursuits is summed up by the talking 'morceau de bois' ['piece of wood'].

Yet the hero's susceptibility to the social distractions, as conveyed through the metaphor of puppetry, is also counterbalanced by a further image of deafness which celebrates this deprivation of the sense of hearing for its capacity to renew our perceptions. In the midst of his entry into the Guermantes puppet theatre, the hint of an alternative to its 'bavardage' thus intrudes, and a (partial/temporary?) heightening of the hero's sensitivity to the worldly signs emitted by this social puppet theatre may be detected. He considers how the sudden arrival of a guest must appear to a man who is deaf. For him, the new arrival 'fait seulement des gestes comme dans un de ces petits théâtres de marionnettes si reposants pour ceux qui ont pris en dégoût le langage parlé' (*RTP*, II, p.376) ['merely gesticulates, like a character from one of those little puppet shows which

is so restful for those who have developed a distaste for the spoken language'(*SLT*, III, p.74)].[14] Viewed in conjunction with the broader metaphorical network that overlays puppet theatre and social distractions, this description hints at a growing awareness, on the part of the apprentice, that one can grow weary of social 'bavardage', a pleasurable alternative to which may be experienced in the purity of sensation that is equivalent to the uncluttered and thus renewed perception of the visual that one would enjoy if robbed of one's sense of hearing. The hero has, of course, known the joy of an unadulterated contemplation of nature.[15] But either convinced of, or fearful of confronting, what he believes to be his inability to grant that experience meaningful expression, he has yielded to the diverting babble of Punchinello. His present insight into a mundane reality rendered extraordinary by virtue of being seen through another person's eyes evokes that effectively abandoned quest for pure contemplation and for the means to express it. The possibility of silencing Punchinello and finding an escape from the puppet theatre he has entered remains open, but should he fail to realize this possibility of escape, his fate will be that of his alter-ego, Swann, whose metaphorical association with the puppet theatre as late as *Sodome et Gomorrhe* [*Sodom and Gomorrah*] – that is, in the late stages of his illness – seems to adumbrate the now ineluctable sterility of his spiritual existence:

> Soit à cause de l'absence de ces joues qui n'étaient plus là pour le diminuer, soit que l'artériosclérose, qui est une intoxication aussi, le rougît comme eût fait l'ivrognerie ou le déformât comme eût fait la morphine, le nez de polichinelle de Swann, longtemps résorbé dans un visage agréable, semblait maintenant énorme, tuméfié, cramoisi, plutôt celui d'un vieil Hébreu que d'un curieux Valois. (*RTP*, III, p.89).
>
> [Whether because of the absence of the cheeks that were no longer there to diminish it, or whether arteriosclerosis, which is also a form of intoxication, had reddened it just as drink would have done, or deformed it, as morphine would have done, Swann's Punchinello nose, for so long reabsorbed into a pleasing face, now seemed enormous, tumid, crimson, more that of an old Hebrew than an inquisitive Valois. (*SLT*, IV, p.94)]

The image is an immediately visual one: Punch's nose is one of his most prominent features, exaggerated and grotesque just as Swann's has now also become. The aptness of the association is further confirmed by the broader context for the extract, for what precedes it is Proust's description of the combination of open curiosity and silent relief on

the part of the other guests, all of whom turn to stare at the shocking physical deterioration in this much altered Swann.[16] Like Punch, therefore, Swann's misfortunes are eagerly observed by all present. Yet the implications of this image extend beyond these literal resonances, for Swann's association with Punch accentuates his own failure to emerge from the rut of social 'bavardage', of repeated, barren dialogue and, but for his daughter, an unrewarding relationship. In short, it underlines his failure, fully or enduringly, to transcend the material and the mundane.[17] The image thus also provides a warning for the hero who has stepped inside the social puppet theatre as one of its protagonists that an authentic interpretation of signs necessitates a dislocation of self from other, that only in the final act of creation can the narrator and characters/self and other intertwine in the many and suggestive ways that Deleuze hints at in his image of the spider's web. This 'peak' of multiplicity cannot be reached without a distancing of self from other in the experiential reality of apprenticeship.

This intricate mesh of references to puppet theatre exposes the distractions that tempt the hero away from higher pursuits; it also uncovers the meaning of the signs emitted by the social world, the emptiness of society rituals and the sterility that accompanies a failure to reject their mechanical dramas. We may already sense that the hero is progressing in his apprenticeship to these signs, that he will distance himself from the willing participant in the puppet show that is his earlier self, but at this stage, he is not yet indifferent to his internality or externality to the social world. He still suffers anxiety. Revelation is thus postponed until the final repetition of the series in *Le Temps retrouvé* where, echoing Deleuze's identification of difference and repetition as the inseparable and correlative powers of essence, subtle new inflections emerge in the imagery of puppet theatre.[18]

Confronted with the physical changes in the people he meets again after a distance of many years at the princesse de Guermantes' party, the famous 'bal de têtes' ['costume ball'], the hero's gaze turns first to M. d'Argencourt:

> C'était trop de parler d'un acteur et, débarrassé qu'il était de toute âme consciente, c'est comme une poupée trépidante, à la barbe postiche de laine blanche, que je le voyais agité, promené dans ce salon, comme dans un guignol à la fois scientifique et philosophique où il servait, comme dans une oraison funèbre ou un cours en Sorbonne, à la fois de rappel à la vanité de tout et d'exemple d'histoire naturelle. (*RTP*, IV, p.502)

> [In fact to call him an actor would be an overstatement, unencumbered as he was by any kind of conscious spirit, it is more as a jigging puppet with a beard made of white wool, that I saw him twitched about and walked up and down in the drawing-room, as if he were a scientific and philosophical puppet-show, in which he served, as in a funeral address or a lecture at the Sorbonne, both as a reminder of the vanity of all things and as a specimen of natural history. (*SLT*, VI, pp.232–3)]

The young hero's starry-eyed entry into the world of the Guermantes was ironically undercut by the artist's multi-dimensional handling of the metaphor of puppet theatre, but each of these voices belonged to different temporal lines. This visualization of M. d'Argencourt in contrast marks a new coincidence of time wasted and time regained, for this is no longer the perspective of the participant in the puppet theatre who is thrilled by his sense of internality. It is, rather, that of the curious observer, and a more detached, indeed, quasi-scientific observer than the one who regarded the Guermantes with wonder before, and on admission onto this stage. As Deleuze argues in the context of love, the truth of lost time is grasped only when the Self that was in love has ceased to exist. So it is with worldly desire, for only when the hero has become indifferent to it can he perceive the truth of its signs. For the first time, therefore, the hero is interpreting the worldly sign in which he himself has clothed the Guermantes accurately; for the first time, the image becomes his own in all its truth. Despite social upheaval comparable to revolution which has, for example, transformed Mme Verdurin into the princesse de Guermantes, the performances, social ceremonial and protocols of those at this costume ball have not changed, nor has the meaning of the worldly signs they emit, but the interpreter is different. To him, their incarnation as puppets now suggests empty ritual, soullessness and a lack of independence, whether in aesthetic or personal judgements, style or matters of taste. The fake beard of this puppet-actor also signals the hero's now evolved ironic recognition of this sign as artifice and pretence. The extent of his development is accentuated by the complexity with which the metaphor of puppet theatre is handled. In addition to an explicit articulation of the implications of M. d'Argencourt's incarnation as a puppet – he is, for example, 'débarrassé [...] de toute âme consciente' ['unencumbered [...] by any kind of conscious spirit'] – other realms of knowledge and experience are drawn in besides. The threads of the spider's web, Deleuze's transversal lines, are spun outwards to the worlds of science and philosophy. Tapping into both scientific and religious

discourses, d'Argencourt is at once natural specimen and fitting illustration of the papal dictum, 'sic transit gloria mundi'. A seemingly incongruous juxtaposition of sources, the fusion of religion and science none the less demonstrates the mature interpreter-soon-to-be creator's capacity to perceive the 'liens secrets', the secret bonds, which unite quite disparate domains:

> On peut faire se succéder indéfiniment dans une description les objets qui figuraient dans le lieu décrit, la vérité ne commencera qu'au moment où l'écrivain prendra deux objets différents, posera leur rapport, analogue dans le monde de l'art à celui qu'est le rapport unique de la loi causale dans le monde de la science, et les enfermera dans les anneaux nécessaires d'un beau style. Même, ainsi que la vie, quand en rapprochant une qualité commune à deux sensations, il dégagera leur essence commune en les réunissant l'une et l'autre pour les soustraire aux contingences du temps, dans une métaphore. (*RTP*, IV, p.468)
>
> [One can list indefinitely in a description all the objects that figure in the place described, but the truth will begin only when the writer takes two different objects, establishes their relationship, the analogue in the world of art of the unique relation created in the world of science by the laws of causality, and encloses them within the necessary armature of a beautiful style. Indeed, just as in life, it begins at the moment when, by bringing together a quality shared by two sensations, he draws out their common essence by uniting then with each other, in order to protect them from the contingencies of time, in a metaphor. (*SLT*, VI, p.198)]

Metaphor provides a means of telling us what signs signify. Through metaphor, too, the superficial appearance of incompatibility is transcended and essence revealed. This is the final step that echoes, but transcends, the time that is rediscovered through involuntary memory where distinct time frames coalesce in a supra-temporal moment. If the hero is to become a creator of resonances, however, the sterile path of social engagement, of time wasted, must be rejected. The final evocation of puppet theatre in the *Recherche* achieves precisely this, for it offers a travestied version of the transcendence of time in the novelistic universe. In order to identify the people he sees with those he once knew, the hero is obliged to consider them 'sur plusieurs plans à la fois' (*RTP*, IV, p.503) ['on several levels at once' (*SLT*, VI, p.233)]. Only by looking at them with his memory as well as his eyes, that is, on the different lines of time where signs intersect and multiply do they acquire depth, for they are

'des poupées baignant dans les couleurs immatérielles des années, des poupées extériorisant le Temps [. . .]' (*RTP*, IV, p.503) ['puppets steeped in the intangible colours of the years, puppets [embodying the external] expression of time' (*SLT*, VI, p.233)]. A reflection of their exaggerated, unnatural appearances, at least to the hero who is confronted with the gradual effects of time seemingly compressed into a single moment, the image of puppetry also crystallizes his own desired relationship to time, for what the guests at the party represent for the narrator (as, indeed, does he for them) is the externalization of wasted time, not the time rediscovered that is offered by involuntary memory or its culmination in the time regained of art and metaphor. Past and present may appear to merge if the same set-pieces are repeatedly enacted, but this passive ritual existence in fact represents a flight from challenge and change, a miring in a superficial rhythm of time.

The artist-subject, according to Deleuze, 'a la révélation d'un temps originel, enroulé, compliqué dans l'essence même, embrassant à la fois toutes ses séries et ses dimensions. Voilà bien le sens du mot «temps retrouvé». Le temps retrouvé, à l'état pur, est compris dans les signes de l'art' (*PS*, p.57) ['the artist-subject has the revelation of an original time, coiled, complicated within essence itself, embracing simultaneously all its series and dimensions. Here is the true sense of the experience of "time regained", which is understood in the signs of art' (*PSa*, p.46)]. It is also the artist's style that, in its meanders and rings, 'ramass[e] les morceaux ultimes, entraîn[e] à des vitesses différentes tous les fragments dont chacun renvoie à un ensemble différent, ou ne renvoie à aucun autre ensemble que celui du style' (*PS*, p.124) ['gather[s] up the ultimate fragments, to sweep along at different speeds all the pieces, each one of which refers to a different whole, to no whole at all, or to no other whole than that of style' (*PSa*, p.115)]. The metaphor of puppet theatre sends out threads to, and intersects with, the novel's other metaphorical webs, only a small selection of which have been hinted at here. Yet within this multiplicity of worlds and webs, the image of puppetry also possesses its own unity. It holds within it all of the lines of time that provide the varying cadences for the narrator's apprenticeship – from his early misunderstanding of this worldly sign, through its 'misappropriation' as metaphor, and to his final recognition of its true meaning. This last line of time was already 'coiled' within the first. Such an argument might be put forward for many of the metaphorical webs that are spun through the *Recherche*, but imagery of the puppet theatre also has its own particular resonances. With its accent on the mechanical and the material, and with its unchanging repetitions, it offers such a compelling metaphorical

embodiment of Deleuze's theory of world signs that it is tempting to speculate that Deleuze's signs may owe something of their conception to the performances of Proust's puppets.

Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, 3rd edition (Paris: Quadrige/P.U.F., 1964), p.218. Hereafter referred to as *PS*. Where possible, the English translation is taken from *Proust and Signs*, tr. Richard Howard, Athlone Contemporary European Thinkers Series (London: Athlone, 2000), p. 182. Hereafter referred to as *PSa*. Otherwise, translations are the author's own.
2. I have explored the network of images of puppet theatre in my *Supernatural Proust: Myth and Metaphor in 'A la recherche du temps perdu'* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp.76–80 and pp.115–16. I am grateful to the Press for granting me permission to rework some of these ideas in relation to Deleuze's study of Proust here.
3. See *PS* for an overview of the four types of signs – worldly signs, the signs of love, sensuous signs, and the signs of art – identified by Deleuze in relation to the *Recherche*.
4. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié, 4 vols, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1987–89), I, p.202. Hereafter referred to as *RTP*. English translations are from the following edition: Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, ed. Christopher Prendergast, tr. various, 6 vols, (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2002). Hereafter referred to as *SLT*.
5. See René Girard, *Mensonge romantique et vérité Romanesque* (Paris: Grasset, 1961).
6. George Speaight, *Punch and Judy: A History* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p.16. Hereafter referred to as *PJ*.
7. Heinrich von Kleist, 'On the Marionette Theatre', tr. Idris Parry, <http://southerncrossreview.org/9/kleist.htm>. Hereafter referred to as *MT*. It is not certain whether Proust knew Kleist's essay; it none the less provides a suggestive interpretative template for the narrator's handling of the metaphor of puppet theatre, particularly given Deleuze's own engagement with the image of the marionette and with Kleist's work in *Mille Plateaux*: 'Les fils de la marionnette, en tant que rhizome ou multiplicité, ne renvoient pas à la volonté supposée une d'un artiste ou d'un montreur, mais à la multiplicité des fibres nerveuses qui forment à leur tour une autre marionnette suivant d'autres dimensions connectées aux premières' [The strings of the marionette, as rhizome or multiplicity, do not refer to the supposed single will of an artist or a puppeteer, but to the multiplicity of nervous fibres that, in turn, form another marionette according to other dimensions connected to the first marionettes (tr. ed.)]. He goes on to relate this to Kleist's writing which is characterized by 'un enchaînement brisé d'affects avec des vitesses variables, des précipitations et transformations toujours en relation avec le dehors' [a broken chain of affects with variable speeds, precipitations and transformations that always relate to the external' (tr. ed.)]: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Introduction to *Mille Plateaux*. *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*: http://hypermedia.univ-paris8.fr/bibliotheque/Plateaux.html#fnx

8. See James Knowlson, 'Beckett and Kleist's Essay "On the Marionette Theatre"', in J. Knowlson and J. Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull: The Later Prose and Drama of Samuel Beckett* (London: John Calder, 1979), pp.277–85. Considered alongside the recurrent presence of those repeated actions, in search of insight, that are performed by Beckett's 'gestural shells' – as compellingly explored elsewhere in this collection by Clark Lunberry in relation to *Waiting for Godot* and the *Recherche* – one might posit Proust's puppets as constituting a further palimpsestic layer within Beckett's work. The recurrence of puppetry as a motif in Beckett's *Trilogy* is discussed in relation to Kleist's essay by David Musgrave in his article 'The Abstract Grotesque in Beckett's *Trilogy*', *Samuel Beckett Today/Samuel Beckett Aujourd'hui*, 14 (2004), pp.371–85.
9. Indeed, it is precisely by recalling a young man repeating several times his attempt to mirror the pose of a classical sculpture, a feat he had initially achieved entirely unconsciously, that makes Kleist appreciate the validity of Mr C.'s argument: 'He [...] raised his foot a second time to prove it to me [the fact that his pose mirrored that of the sculpture], but the attempt [...] did not succeed. Confused, he raised his foot a third and fourth time; he must have raised it ten times more: in vain! He was unable to produce the same movement again. And the movements that he made had so comical an effect that I could hardly suppress my laughter' (*MT*). The interaction of the voluntary and involuntary further resonates the patterns of Proustian memory.
10. Speaight identifies 14 stock characters in the Punch and Judy show and its slight variants throughout Europe, although of these only a small number appear frequently in encounters with Punch, notably Judy, the Devil, and the policeman (see *PJ*, pp.85–92).
11. Henri Bergson, *Le Rire: essai sur la signification du comique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975), p.60. The translation is a modified version of that given on the Project Gutenberg website: *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, tr. C.S.H. Brereton and F. Rothwell, Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/4352. It is surely significant that of the seven metaphorical evocations of puppet theatre to appear in *Le Côté de Guermantes*, six are mediated images. Only one is an unmediated metaphor. The repeated choice of a mediated, rather than unmediated, image serves to underline the deliberateness of the illusion and to draw attention to its artificiality.
12. 'Et si les groupes donnent encore une riche matière à l'interprétation, c'est qu'ils ont des affinités cachées, un contenu proprement inconscient. Les vraies familles, les vrais milieux, les vrais groupes sont les milieux, les groupes "intellectuels". C'est-à-dire: on appartient toujours à la société dont émanent les idées et les valeurs auxquelles on croit' (*PS*, pp.99–100) ['And if the groups still afford a rich substance for interpretation, it is because they possess concealed affinities, a strictly unconscious content. The true families, the true milieus, the true groups are "intellectual". Which is to say, one always belongs to the society that emits the ideas and the values one believes in' (*PSa*, p.83)].
13. Although Proust appears to make little distinction between 'Polichinelle' and 'Guignol', the insistence of Polichinelle's voice here may none the less serve to emphasize the negative and threatening aspects of the puppet show.
14. Proust here seems to have in mind a silent form of puppet theatre. However, puppet theatre, in its various forms, is characterized not only by movement,

but by sound. Bil Baird explains: 'Equally important to the illusion [as movement] is sound. A very great part of the puppet is the music he works to, or the voice he emits. And his voice can be as much an evocation as his movements. Aside from the hundreds of word languages that people use, a puppet can speak with sighs, roars, coughs; through buzzers, poundings on the floor, bells on the ankles of the operators, and the sounds of instruments': *The Art of the Puppet* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p.14. If not silent, therefore, puppet theatre can certainly be non-verbal. In any case, the significance of Proust's image and intention, based on an opposition of bavardage and silence (or the non-verbal), remains.

15. An early example is his non-verbalized outburst of unmitigated joy when contemplating the effects of sun and rain on the natural world while on a childhood walk near Monjouvain: '"Zut, zut, zut, zut"' (*RTP*, I, p.153) ['Damn, damn, damn, damn' (*SLT*, I, p.156)].
16. 'Et c'est avec une stupéfaction presque désobligeante, où il entrait de la curiosité indiscrète, de la cruauté, un retour à la fois quiet et soucieux sur soi-même (mélange à la fois de *suave mari magno* et de *memento quia pulvis*, eût dit Robert), que tous les regards s'attachèrent à ce visage' (*RTP*, III, p.89) ['And it was with an almost disobliging stupefaction, into which there entered a tactless curiosity, cruelty, and at once calm yet concerned moment of self-awareness (a mixture at once of *suave mari magno* and *memento quia pulvis*, Robert would have said), that every gaze became fixed on that face' (*SLT*, IV, p.94)].
17. This is not to suggest that Swann experiences no moments of transcendent insight. On listening to Vinteuil's sonata at both Mme Verdurin's and Mme de Sainte-Euverte's, he experiences the promise of an existence beyond everyday reality; he senses that art has the power to overcome time but, crucially, he never takes the final step of becoming a creator himself. His appreciation of Vinteuil's music, itself hopelessly intertwined with his feelings for Odette, thus marks out his spiritual highpoint as a vicariously created one. See *RTP*, I, pp.205–8 and I, pp.339–47; *SLT*, I, pp.211–14 and 347–55.
18. 'En vérité différence et répétition sont les deux puissances de l'essence, inséparables et corrélatives' (*PS*, p.61) ['In truth, difference and repetition are the two inseparable and correlative forces of essence' (*PSa*, p.49)].

16
Murphy's Madeleine

Adam A. Watt

Beckett's study of Proust was first published in 1931. Seven years later, he published his first novel, *Murphy*, which on the surface might seem to bear little trace of the earlier writer's influence. Proust as he is commonly perceived – the high-brow Proust, the producer of fine-spun sentences that twist languidly on over many pages – may seem rather at odds with *Murphy*'s vulgarities, punning, humour, its abstruse concerns with astrology and cosmology. Proust, of course, is a writer with a hugely varied palette; the pages of the *Recherche* are, by turns, home to profundity and profanity, slang and formalities, bluster and restraint. Proust's eye for detail – architectural, chromatic, lexical – is almost unparalleled in the modern novel. As Walter Benjamin put it, 'Proust's pointing finger is unequalled'.[1] Beckett, so often thought of as bleak and nihilistic, also has a remarkable eye for detail, and as a user of language he is remarkably light-fingered (Beckett, as Mary Bryden has put it, is a 'lexical magpie'[2]). It is on the level of detail, of fleeting nods and winks, knowing 'clins d'œil' from one great examiner of the human species to another, that I wish to concentrate in this chapter which seeks to shed light on Beckett's Proustian borrowings, both thematic and formal, in his first novel, *Murphy*.

Many of Beckett's great themes, Beckett's terrible themes, come to him by way of the pages of the Gallimard's 'abominable' sixteen-volume Proust edition.[3] Habit, suffering, boredom, memory: these are ideas explored in the pages of Beckett's *Proust* before they are explored and expanded in the novels, plays, poems and other 'disjecta' and 'residua' of the following decades. The Proust book is a curious blend of translation, commentary and analysis, and it is among its densely-packed pages that I want to begin.

Of the first instance of involuntary memory in Proust's novel (the madeleine incident), Beckett writes, '[it] would justify the assertion that his entire book is a monument to involuntary memory and the epic of its action' (*P*, p.34). These moments are undoubtedly the most written about (and probably the most read) of the *Recherche*; Proust in a nutshell, if you like, is Proust in a teacup. 'The whole of Proust's world comes out of a teacup', Beckett summarizes (*P*, p.34) and then continues in more lyrical vein, stating that the narrator's childhood is one that involuntary memory 'conjures in all the relief and colour of its essential significance from the shallow well of a cup's inscrutable banality' (*P*, pp.343–5). This is a key phrase, I think: 'inscrutable banality'. When I suggest that Beckett and Proust share an acute eye for detail, this is one kind of detail to which I think their eyes are drawn: the everyday, the commonplace – the teacups, tin-openers and turnips that punctuate our daily routines, mundane yet often unexpectedly difficult to deal with.[4]

I start with Proust's teacup because it is a tea-drinking scene from *Murphy* that will be my initial focus here. Murphy's 'fourpenny lunch', like Proust's madeleine scene, centres on the drinking of tea, although its outcome errs definitely more on the side of banality than that of the transcendence of time.[5] The importance of tea in the *Recherche* is undisputed, and, in *Murphy*, a tea-drinking scene is created by Beckett as a humorous sort of set-piece, an exposition of Murphy's devious mind at work which bears marks of being an irreverent reworking of Proust's famous scene.[6] In Proust's original, of course, after being outside one cold winter's day, the narrator's mother gives him a cup of tea:

> Je portai à mes lèvres une cuillerée du thé où j'avais laissé s'amollir un morceau de madeleine. Mais à l'instant même où la gorgée mêlée des miettes du gâteau toucha mon palais, je tressaillis, attentif à ce qui se passait d'extraordinaire en moi. Un plaisir délicieux m'avait envahi, isolé, sans la notion de sa cause.[7]
>
> [I carried to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had let soften a piece of madeleine. But at the very instant when the mouthful of tea mixed with cake-crumbs touched my palate, I quivered, attentive to the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. A delicious pleasure had invaded me, isolated me, without my having any notion as to its cause. (*SLT*, I, p.47)]

These are the priceless moments of bliss, the sudden transportation by a contingent occurrence out of the mundane and into another realm. The feeling is described as a 'puissante joie', the origin of which the narrator

is keen to discover. He wants to know what it means, whether he can pin it down. He continues: 'Je bois une seconde gorgée où je ne trouve rien de plus que dans la première, une troisième qui m'apporte un peu moins que la seconde' (*RTP*, I, pp.444–5) ['I drink a second mouthful, in which I find nothing more than in the first, a third that gives me a little less than the second' (*SLT*, I, p.48)]. It is Proust's narrator's experience here that is the first aspect reworked in Beckett's scene. After arriving at his chosen café, and before getting *his* tea, Murphy goes to sit down:

> The sensation of the seat of a chair coming together with his drooping posteriors at last was so delicious that he rose again at once and repeated the sit, lingeringly and with intense concentration. Murphy did not so often meet with these tendernesses that he could afford to treat them casually. The second sit, however, was a great disappointment. (*MY*, p.49)

We can see here the similarities: Murphy's second sit does not aim to rekindle a memory or explain a sensation, but the repetition of the uncommonly pleasurable act serves to demonstrate the law of diminishing returns with which Proust's narrator also becomes acquainted.

The narrator continues: 'Il est temps que je m'arrête, la vertu du breuvage semble diminuer' (*RTP*, I, p.45) ['It is time for me to stop, the virtue of the drink seems to be diminishing' (*SLT*, I, p.48)]. This comment highlights the humorous contrast between the two scenes, for there is nothing virtuous about Murphy's 'breuvage' ['drink']: as we shall see in a moment, the latter's tea is consumed with 'infamy'. Proust's narrator's tea drinking is gentle, anodyne, and mellifluously communicated to his readers on a wave of mellow, lilting |m| sounds, gradually building to a harmonic climax of revelation and recollection that circles round, ending, of course, with his childhood recaptured, 'sorti, ville et jardins, de ma tasse de thé' (*RTP*, I, p.47) ['emerged, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea' (*SLT*, I, p.50)]. Would that Murphy's tea were this good.

Once comfortably seated, he orders a cup of tea and a packet of assorted biscuits, the assortment of which later yields a classically Beckettian piece of analytic thinking that goes nowhere about the number of possible variations on the order of their consumption.[8] But to the tea. No revelations, no metaphysical reflection, no musical narrative. This is Murphy's madeleine:

> The seedy solipsist then, having said his silent grace and savoured his infamy in advance, drew up his chair briskly to the table, seized the

> cup of tea and half emptied it at one gulp. No sooner had this gone to the right place than he began to splutter, eructate and complain, as though he had been duped into swallowing a saturated solution of powdered glass. (*MY*, p.50)

Notice the lexical parallels: Proust's narrator shudders ('je tressaillis') 'à l'instant même' ['at the very instant'] that the contents of his spoon touch his palate; Murphy shudders too, 'no sooner' than his tea had 'gone to the right place': the somatic effects of the tea feigned by Murphy seem every bit as dramatic as those of the 'morceau de madeleine' ['piece of madeleine']. Proust describes the sensation as a trio of feelings that are overcome: 'J'avais cessé de me sentir médiocre, contingent, mortel' (*RTP*, I, p.44) ['I had ceased to feel I was mediocre, contingent, mortal' (*SLT*, I, p.47)]; Murphy's trio of effects – spluttering, eructation and complaint – are a little less transcendent.

That, then, is the story of Murphy's madeleine. It is not, however, the only possible Proustian echo in this richly, self-consciously allusive novel.[9] The scene above shows Beckett irreverently substituting inelegant bodily processes for Proust's momentous epiphany. The sublime or transcendent character of Proust's narrator's experience *is* found later in Beckett's novel (and more explicitly in the precursor 'Lightning Calculation'), but predictably, perhaps, it is reset and undercut by the humour arising from the disjunction between the activity described and its effect. In 'Lightning Calculation', we witness a prompt transition from the mundane to the sublime which bears a close resemblance to the consumption of the madeleine; cf:

> he felt himself flooded with happiness, with a sense of strength also […]. He finished the Osborne and began the ginger. It was as though his whole being were renewed.[10]

> Il m'avait aussitôt rendu les vicissitudes de la vie indifférentes, ses désastres inoffensifs, sa brièveté illusoire […] en me remplissant d'une essence précieuse […]. J'avais cessé de me sentir médiocre, contingent, mortel. D'où avait pu me venir cette puissante joie? (*RTP*, I, p.44)
>
> [It had immediately made the vicissitudes of life unimportant to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory, […] by filling me with a precious essence […] I had ceased to feel I was mediocre, contingent, mortal. (*SLT*, I, p.47)]

In the novel, the scene where Murphy prepares his 'meal' is a comic one: Murphy contemplates his five biscuits like a celebrant 'on his knees' (*MY*,

p.57), but is ultimately denied the pleasure of eating his biscuits by Rosie Dew's dog. The theme of renewal and invigoration remains ('were he to take the final step and overcome his infatuation with the ginger [the biscuit he always eats last], then the assortment would spring to life before him, dancing the radiant measure of its total permutability' (*MY*, p.57). The excitement here is too much for Murphy who, 'overcome by these perspectives [...] fell forward on his face in the grass' (*MY*, p.57). This attitude of perplexity and jubilation when confronted by the rich plurality of the world is one presented to us repeatedly in the *Recherche* to a more serious end. When the narrator reads in- and out-of-doors in Combray, when he sees the Martinville bell towers, or the trees at Hudimesnil (the list could go on) – these scenes and others where Proust explores multiplicity in singularity, and problematizes perspective and subjectivity might be thought of as feeding (now directly, now obliquely) into Beckett's beloved permutation games.

A further Proustian parallel may be seen between Murphy's favoured attitude of repose – naked, tied by seven scarves to his teak rocking chair – and Charlus's wartime proclivity for flagellation while bound, 'enchaîné sur un lit comme Prométhée sur son rocher' (*RTP*, IV, p.394) ['chained to a bed like Prometheus to his rock' (*SLT*, VI, p.123)]. Charlus, of course, is not a martyr suffering for his bold deeds like Prometheus: Proust's reworking of the myth, whether from Aeschylus or Hesiod, is an ironic one, much as Beckett's reworkings of Proustian commonplaces are often ironic. Here, in fact, Murphy and Charlus have much in common: each is tethered in the name of pleasure. Charlus, the narrator surmises, seeks mistreatment at the hands of toughs with a passing resemblance to Morel as a compensatory sadistic pleasure to take the place of that which he can no longer share with the young violinist. Murphy, for his part, similarly 'sat in his chair in this way because it gave him pleasure, it appeased his body. Then it set him free in his mind' (*MY*, p.6). While Prometheus, the mythical hero (etymologically the 'fore-thinker') suffers eternal torment by the will of the Gods, his modern incarnations undergo their bondage in the name of idiosyncratic pleasures. The seedy solipsist and the degenerate aristocrat seek a perverse freedom through their bonds. Considering these aspects of the texts side by side suggests that Beckett's practice of eclectic and irreverent borrowing and manipulation may itself have its roots in Proust's own textual practice.[11]

While Charlus in chains finds an echo in Murphy in his chair, Neary, Murphy's ex-teacher and an unlikely lover figure, echoes, in courting Miss Counihan, the attentions Charles Swann pays to Odette de Crécy. Swann never finishes his study of Vermeer because of his infatuation

with Odette.[12] He adopts her tastes, frowned on by society, and showers her with gifts: 'Si, à la devanture d'un fleuriste ou d'un joaillier, la vue d'un arbuste ou d'un bijou le charmait, aussitôt il pensait à les envoyer à Odette' (*RTP*, I, p.262) ['If, in the window of a florist or a jeweller, the sight of a shrub or a jewel charmed him, instantly he would think of sending them to Odette' (*SLT*, I, p.269)]. Neary, for his part, *has* completed a tractate, *The Doctrine of the Limit*, of which he gives a 'passionately autographed copy' (*MY*, p.32) to Miss Counihan, as well as sending her mangoes, orchids and Cuban cigarettes. When finally they meet, it is in Shandon churchyard by the grave of 'Father Prout (F.S. Mahony)' (*MY*, p.32), whose name is devilishly close to Proust's (Prout was a multilingual humorist of the early nineteenth century who reputedly described himself as 'an Irish potato seasoned with Attic salt').[13] Neary arrives at the churchyard bearing a 'superb bunch of cattleyas' which Miss Counihan 'lays on the slab' (*MY*, p.32). The Proustian connotations of these flowers are strong (Swann and Odette euphemistically refer to their lovemaking as 'faire catleya' (*RTP*, I, p.230) ['make catleya' (*SLT*, I, p.237)]).[14] Whether we read this scene as a homage to Prout or Proust or both, it seems quite clearly to be another witty rerouting of a Proustian commonplace within an Anglo-Irish literary context.

In the second part of this chapter, I shall consider two final aspects of *Murphy* which point to shared concerns and approaches, common ground between Beckett and Proust regarding the description of characters' faces and appearance. Neary, towards the end of the novel, feels worn out: 'he felt that to move a muscle or utter a syllable would certainly prove fatal' (*MY*, p.125). He manages to get through the night, and when Wylie calls the next day, Neary explains to him, in a curious turn of phrase, that he had felt that he was 'going to start dying' (*MY*, p.125). The outward signals of this night of torment are striking: Neary's hair turns 'white as snow' (*MY*, p.125). This sudden change, noted in passing by Beckett without any fanfare, is one with a literary precedent in Proust's novel. Charlus, whose wartime pleasure-seeking, as we have seen, allies him to Murphy lashed to his rocking chair, suffers late in life from an attack of apoplexy, and when the narrator sees him in the Champs-Elysées, he is described thus: 'Son chapeau de paille laissait voir une forêt indomptée de cheveux entièrement blancs; une barbe blanche, comme celle que la neige fait aux statues des fleuves dans les jardins publics, coulait de son menton' (*RTP*, IV, p.438) ['But his panama hat revealed an unruly forest of entirely white hair; a white beard, like those formed by the snow on the statues of river-gods in the public gardens, flowed from his chin' (*SLT*, VI, p.167)]. The narrator opines that unless

Charlus had hitherto dyed his hair and beard and was now obliged, in his weakened condition, to cease the practice, the attack of apoplexy (a near-death experience like that of Neary) had:

> comme en une sorte de précipité chimique, rendu visible et brillant tout le métal que lançaient et dont étaient saturées, comme autant de geysers, les mèches, maintenant de pur argent, de sa chevelure et de sa barbe, cependant qu'elle avait imposé au vieux prince déchu la majesté shakespearienne d'un roi Lear. (*RTP*, IV, p.438)
>
> [as if by a kind of chemical precipitation, […] rendered gleamingly visible all the metal with which the locks, now pure silver, of his head and his beard were saturated and which sprang out from them like so many geysers, so that the old, decayed prince now wore the Shakespearian majesty of a King Lear. (*SLT*, VI, p.167)]

In these lines, we see the rich plurality of Proust's image construction: the effects of a bodily trauma are translated, as so often in the *Recherche*, into terms drawn from quite unexpected domains. After the predictable image of snow, Proust's lexical field becomes that of chemistry, then metallurgy, and geology; and finally the image is completed with an analogy mined from Shakespeare.[15] The plurality of fields and sources on which Proust draws, and his boundary-crossing method of image creation, are in many ways mirrored in Beckett's compositional technique in his early fiction. This can be seen in the very plural fabric of *Murphy*, interwoven as it is with astrology, philosophies, mathematics and a multitude of other threads that we encounter across its pages. As Gontarski argues after Knowlson in his preface to Ackerley's *Demented Particulars*, Beckett's technique was one of 'grafting' ideas, thoughts and phrases from his reading into his writing.[16] In this way, while developing his own style, Beckett was able to absorb, adapt and fuse into his own writings various aspects of the philosophical and literary texts in which he immersed himself in the 1930s. Ackerley untiringly exposes Beckett's intermeshed substructures and it is clear that at many points in *Murphy*, Proustian figures, or shadows of such, linger in the textures of the palimpsestic text. Our explorations so far point towards this quality in Beckett's novel. Gérard Genette, of course, wrote that Proust's work is 'un palimpseste où se confondent et s'enchevêtrent plusieurs figures et plusieurs sens, toujours présents tous à la fois' [a palimpsest where several figures and meanings, all of which are always present at once, meet and become entangled].[17] He continues that these multiple figures and meanings 'ne se laissent déchiffrer que tous ensemble

dans leur inextricable totalité' (*PP*, p.67) [can only be deciphered all together in their inextricable totality (my translations)]. It is questionable how many (if any) of Proust's readers are capable of this sort of interpretive heroics; equally, *pace* Ackerley's endeavours, Beckett's palimpsest seems to be formed of far too many layers of reference to permit anything approaching such a holistic reading of his allusions. A knowledge of Proust's work will undoubtedly add depth and nuance to our understanding of some of Beckett's characters and situations and of the crucible-like qualities of his mind in the 1930s. Whether we can ever hope to gain purchase on Beckett's many intertextual references 'dans leur inextricable totalité' ['in their inextricable totality'] remains debatable.

When Murphy takes a job as a nurse at the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat (a whiff of 'madeleine' again?) he makes the acquaintance of Mr Endon, a schizophrenic with 'a psychosis so limpid and imperturbable that Murphy felt drawn to it as Narcissus to his fountain' (*MY*, p.105). Murphy plays chess with Mr Endon who, one night, after soundly defeating Murphy, escapes from his room, causing all sorts of havoc. Murphy gets him back into his quarters and puts him to bed. What follows might be read as a dark reworking of the famous kiss scene between the narrator and Albertine in *Le Côté de Guermantes* in which 'dans ce court trajet de mes lèvres vers sa joue,' the narrator tells us, 'c'est dix Albertines que je vis' (*RTP*, II, p.660) ['in the brief trajectory of my lips towards her cheek, [were] ten Albertines' (*SLT*, III, p.363)]. Beckett's scene has all the physical proximity and intimacy associated with a tender embrace. Murphy leans closer and closer, quite entranced by Endon's eyes. In Proust's scene, the narrator unexpectedly and uncompromisingly holds forth on the unsuitedness for kissing of the human physiognomy, thus rather spoiling the moment. Beckett, too, although suggesting that '[t]hey were all set, Murphy and Mr Endon, for a butterfly kiss, if that is still the correct expression' (*MY*, p.140), provides instead a staggering description of the eyes into which Murphy gazes, Endon's unseeing eyes.

The description is most redolent of the passages of remarkably hybrid imagery used to describe characters' faces in *Le Temps retrouvé* [*Time Regained*]. To read one of these descriptions alongside Beckett's portrait of Mr Endon is highly illuminating. Proust's depiction, discussed above, of Charlus, ravaged yet somehow ennobled by time, is more complex and accomplished than Beckett's fleeting remarks about Neary. Beckett's rendering of Endon's face, however, is undoubtedly a far more powerful and radical exercise in portraiture. The following description is of the

duchesse de Guermantes, seen by the narrator in her later years, after a long absence:

> Dans les joues restées si semblables pourtant de la duchesse de Guermantes et pourtant composites maintenant comme un nougat, je distinguai une trace de vert-de-gris, un petit morceau rose de coquillage concassé, une grosseur difficile à définir, plus petite qu'une boule de gui et moins transparente qu'une perle de verre. (*RTP*, IV, p.515)
>
> [In the cheeks of the Duchesse de Guermantes, still very recognizable but now as variable as nougat, I could make out a trace of verdigris, a small pink patch of crushed shell, and a little lump, hard to define, smaller than a mistletoe berry and less transparent than a glass pearl. (*SLT*, VI, pp.2454–6)]

Compare the following depiction of Mr Endon:

> The iris was reduced to a thin glaucous rim of spawn-like consistency, so like a ballrace between the black and white that these could have started to rotate in opposite directions, or better still the same direction, without causing Murphy the least surprise. All four lids were everted in an ectropion of great expressiveness, a mixture of cunning, depravity and rapt attention. Approaching his eyes still nearer Murphy could see the red frills of mucus, a large point of suppuration at the point of an upper lash, the filigree of veins like the Lord's prayer on a toenail and in the cornea, horribly reduced, obscured and distorted, his own image. (*MY*, p.140)

Beckett revels in the portraiture of his characters in *Murphy*, and this particular example is *sui generis* to say the least. Proust, for his part, provides many more facial descriptions of the sort picked out here in the closing stages of his novel, faces seen after years of absence whose decay and realignments shock and surprise the narrator. What stands out most from the comparison with Beckett, however, is the rawness of the latter's description, the unforgiving physiological detail combined with a breathtaking breadth of registers. Beckett borrows, develops, and eclipses Proust's intrepid approach to image selection. Moving from nougat to vert-de-gris to crushed shells to mistletoe to glass in describing a woman's cheeks, and enriching the passage through subtle sound echoes was certainly radically plural in its time, but Proust's delicate, refined lexis seems tame beside Beckett's 'spawn-like', 'ectropion', 'red frills of mucus', and, of course, the unforgettable 'Lord's prayer on a toenail'. Beckett's

work takes the polish of the early model and exposes a rougher reality startlingly compelling in its unpleasantness. It might be noted in passing that the superb adjective, 'aeruginous' (*MY*, p.44), that Beckett picks early in the novel to describe Murphy's suit, of all things, derives etymologically from a French word stemming from the Latin, meaning 'the colour or nature of verdigris or copper rust'.

Both *Murphy* and the *Recherche* expose their authors as lovers of idiolects, seekers after the right word. The *OED* gives *Murphy* as its only cited source for a number of words – panpygoptosis and vermigrade for example (*MY*, pp.58 & 78); *Le Grand Robert de la langue française* quotes Proust for his use of, among many others, 'inénarrable' (*RTP*, IV, p.338), a word whose dual meanings ('that which cannot be narrated' and 'that which cannot be uttered without provoking laughter') have more than a fleetingly Beckettian flavour to them. Albertine's rich, fluid vocabulary, where street slang cohabits with rarified exoticisms such as the famous 'mousmé' (*RTP*, II, p.652) ['mousme' (*SLT*, III, p.355)], also cited by *Le Grand Robert*, finds parallels in the pages of *Murphy*. Both Proust and Beckett plunder the weird and wonderful lexicons of medicine, pathology and science and both know when to flatten language out into its everyday forms of address. We are told of Murphy's love of darkness. He 'believed there was no dark like his own dark' (*MY*, p.54) and this darkness is described as 'a flux of forms' (*MY*, p.65). This recalls the darkness that envelops Proust's narrator at the opening of the *Recherche*, a darkness that enfolds the flux of forms of past selves, memories and anxieties. Proust's mature narrator informs us that we can only call our own 'ce que nous tirons de l'obscurité qui est en nous et que ne connaissent pas les autres' (*RTP*, IV, p.459) ['The only things that come from ourselves are those we draw out of the obscurity within us, which can never be known by other people' (*SLT*, VI, p.188)]. Reading the richly plural verbal textures of *Murphy*, the precision, the playfulness, the pathos and wit, suggests that in Beckett's inner darkness an important place is held by Proust.

Notes

1. Walter Benjamin, 'The Image of Proust', in *Illuminations*, tr. Harry Zohn (London: Collins/Fontana, 1973), pp.203–17 [p.214].
2. The phrase was used by Mary Bryden, in a conference paper entitled 'Reverberating Inwards: Beckett Reading Proust' which was delivered at the *Beckett's Proust/Deleuze's Proust* conference held at Cardiff University in the Beckett Centenary year.
3. Samuel Beckett, *Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: John Calder, 1987), p.9. Hereafter referred to as *P*.

4. For a consideration of Proust's treatment of the everyday, see my essay 'Proust, poet of the ordinary', in *Au seuil de la modernité: Proust et ses prédécesseurs – Essais en hommage à Richard Bales*, eds Nigel Harkness and Marion Schmid (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009).
5. Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (London: Picador, 1973), p.49. Hereafter referred to as *MY*. Originally published with Routledge in 1938, references here are to the Picador edition, whose pagination is replicated in the Calder edition of 1963, reprinted in 1993.
6. For an examination of the role of tea drinking in the *Recherche*, particularly in the context of representations of homosexuality, see Emily Eells, *Proust's Cup of Tea: Homoeroticism and Victorian Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002). See especially Chapter One 'A Gay English Tea Party', pp.11–33.
7. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié, 4 vols, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1987–89), I, p.44. Hereafter referred to as *RTP*. English translations are taken from the following edition: Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, ed. Christopher Prendergast, tr. various, 6 vols (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2002). Hereafter referred to as *SLT*.
8. This particular permutation game has its roots in a short typescript entitled 'Lightning Calculation', where the central character, Quigley, meticulously carries out the same 'calculation' relating to the consumption of his biscuits. For an analysis of the typescript, see John Pilling, *Beckett before Godot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.133–6.
9. C.J. Ackerley in *Demented Particulars: The Annotated 'Murphy'* (Tallahassee, Fla.: Journal of Beckett Studies Books, 1998; rev. ed. 2004) has provided an invaluable resource for readers interested in, or perplexed by, Beckett's many allusions, borrowings and adaptations in *Murphy*.
10. Quoted in Pilling, p.135.
11. Margaret Topping analyses Proust's practice of adapting, transforming, collapsing and recasting Christian and mythological figures in *Proust's Gods: Christian and Mythological Figures of Speech in the Works of Marcel Proust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For Proust's use of the Prometheus myth, see pp.50–1 and pp.81–2 in particular. Topping's classification of Proust's text as a 'grand associative fabric' (p.81) is one which would be equally apposite for *Murphy*.
12. Vermeer's yellow, so poignantly interwoven into Proust's novel in the episode recounting Bergotte's death (*RTP*, III, pp.692–3; *SLT*, V, pp.169–70), also makes its appearance in *Murphy* (*MY*, p.127).
13. See David Clayton Browning, *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, compiled after John W. Cousin (London: J.M. Dent, 1958; reprinted 1970), p.445.
14. Cattleyas are said to be Odette's favourite flowers (*RTP*, I, p.218); she carries a 'bouquet de catleyas' and has others in her corsage which Swann 'straightens' for her, initiating their physical relationship (*RTP*, I, pp.228–31). The history of cattleyas as a genus, and their role in Swann and Odette's relationship, is compellingly discussed by Daniel Karlin in his recent study *Proust's English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.83–90.
15. The writing of Beckett's late prose work *Worstward Ho* is said to stem from lines from *King Lear*: '…the worst is not// so long as we can say, 'This is the worst'', Act 4, sc. I. For a summary of Beckett's relations to Shakespeare, see

C.J. Ackerley and S.E. Gontarski, *The Faber Companion to Beckett* (London: Faber, 2006), pp.521–4.

16. S.E. Gontarski, 'Reading Beckett's Reading: The *Demented Particulars*', in Ackerley, *Demented Particulars*, pp.6–9.
17. Gérard Genette, 'Proust palimpseste', in *Figures I* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), pp.39–67 [p. 67]. Hereafter referred to as *PP*.

Epilogue:
An Imaginary Encounter between Proust, Beckett and Deleuze

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17

. . . Proust. . . Beckett. . . Deleuze. . .: a Quad Regained

Jérôme Cornette

To Élie D.

'French and English are the same language'.

(Wallace Stevens)

Editor's note

I have been most fortunate in accessing and partially transcribing an arguably not insignificant contribution to Proust scholarship, that is, a quad of unpublished, undated, autographed letters, recently unearthed by Katherine Kolb in the attic of her late father, Philip Kolb (1907–92), the distinguished editor of Proust's correspondence. I travelled to Urbana, Illinois, in Autumn 2005 and have since exhausted myself deciphering this exceptional set of letters:[1]

1) Three letters by Marcel Proust to Gilles Deleuze

   1.1 One appreciative letter, thanking Deleuze for his *Proust et les Signes* monograph;
   1.2 One later letter, expressing strong reservations about the additions to the original edition of *Proust et les Signes*;
   1.3 A final letter, reverting to hyperbolic praise.

2) One letter by Marcel Proust to [~~Unnamable~~]

This letter is in very shabby condition, and I was uncertain about the identity of its recipient for quite some time. However, the reference to

'the first [~~Unnamable~~] in English'[2] as pointing to the Irish writer Samuel Beckett is a distinct possibility in light of his 1931 Chatto & Windus monograph. This is further buttressed by manifold allusions to the Beckett corpus, though, at first, I had not ruled out Charles Scott-Moncrieff or T.S. Eliot as plausible alternatives.

At this stage of my detective work, I am most happy to present a fragment of Proust's second letter, the third letter in its entirety, as well as excerpts of the letter to Beckett which Proust wrote in English, perhaps not without Marie Nordlinger's assistance. Aside from a few Gallicisms, quite charming at that, Proust's letter evinces a rather unusually idiomatic command of English.

JÉRÔME CORNETTE

Virginia Commonwealth University

Three of four unpublished undated autographed letters

Kolb–Proust Archive (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA) References: [MP 010569A], MP 010569B, MP 010569C, & MP 010569D.

®Katherine Kolb

1) A fragment of MP 010569B

[. . .]

Les symphonies de Vinteuil fournissent le modèle d'œuvres achevées, dans lesquelles chaque partie à son tour reçoit du reste une justification qu'il lui confère en retour, ce que persistent à nier les additions spectaculaires à votre étude ; lorsque vous écartez les «platitudes sur l'œuvre d'art comme totalité organique» vous paraissez lire mon œuvre au microscope et rater son unité ; quant aux platitudes, d'autres passages dans la première version de votre livre, et je songe en particulier aux admirables développements, dans la section «L'Image de la pensée», sur le créateur comparé au jaloux qui surveille les signes auxquels la vérité se trahit, attestent assez que son traitement poétique et érotique (souvenez-vous par exemple de la danse contre-seins d'Albertine et d'Andrée au casino d'Incarville) est capitalissime – oui vraiment, cher Monsieur, le plus profond c'est la peau.

Vous opérez sur mon texte comme un chirurgien fou et on ne sait plus s'il convient de vous suivre dans un délire, où interpréter le cède sur expérimenter : se pourrait-il vraiment que l'écrivain ne soit qu'un double du philosophe, pour lequel il s'agirait plus que jamais de poser les problèmes, plutôt que de les résoudre, et par conséquent de déposer les faux problèmes qui bloquent la réflexion, ainsi que les développements sur «L'Image de la pensée» paraissent le suggérer ? Le vent se lève, cher ami, il faut tenter de vivre un peu, croyez-vous que j'aie trouvé la matière de mon œuvre dans les livres seuls ? Êtes-vous si insensible au point de ne pas percevoir, sous la ligne flexueuse, une vision directe et continue de la réalité intérieure ?

[. . .]

2) MP 010569C

44, rue Hamelin [manque la date]

Mon cher Deleuze,

Votre très aimable et très intéressante lettre m'a surpris et charmé. Je voudrais vous y répondre plus longuement, mais les souffrances

physiques ne me le permettent pas ; mon excellent docteur use sur mon corps de morphine, aspirine, adrénaline, euvalpine, spartéine, en un mot tous les médicaments que vous pouvez imaginer ; le résultat jusqu'ici est faible, sauf un grand abrutissement – au moins les idées élevées restent-elles à leur place ! Combien, mieux portants, se soustraient à l'oeuvre à accomplir en se répétant: «Je ne peux pas continuer»; pourtant je dois continuer.

Je me bornerai à vous dire la joie que m'a causé l'annonce de ce projet d'un livre écrit à quatre mains, avec ce philosophe italien M. Gattopardi. Je ne sais comment vous comptez vous y prendre : c'est là une prouesse dont je serais tout à fait incapable, étant donné ce que me coûte déjà d'accorder entre elles mes propres idées pour les rassembler dans un livre.

Mais je comprends, d'après ce que vous m'en dites, que la rédaction de ce livre ressemblera à une sorte de patchwork, procédant par raccords de pensée. Cela me remet en mémoire une discussion que j'ai eue naguère avec ma fidèle caméristе, Céleste Albaret, sur mon livre composé, je n'ose pas dire ambitieusement comme une cathédrale—je vous entends déjà me dire : «Le Tout, c'est l'Ouvert» –, mais tout simplement comme une robe.

Je voudrais pouvoir discuter tout au long les réflexions que vous développez dans votre lettre, mais je crains de manquer de force et je m'en tiendrais donc à quelques remarques. L'image du «rhizome» me paraît tout à fait propice à faire sentir le type de multiplicité hétérogène et qualitative qui convient à la texture d'une réalité en devenir, et ne tourne le dos, comme on me l'a malencontreusement reproché, ni à la durée ni à l'élan vital. Je crains seulement que ceux de vos lecteurs qui n'ont que des notions vagues en matière de botanique n'aillent bourdonner des choses extravagantes (or, qui dès...), et que ceux qui, au contraire, sont versés dans cette matière, n'y trouvent l'occasion d'objecter sans fin, ou de vous reprocher une sorte de vitalisme végétal qui serait tout à fait étranger à vos vues. Mais vous saurez, j'en suis certain, tourner ces difficultés. Pourquoi ne pas consacrer une introduction, et même une étude séparée, à cette question ? Il faudra seulement songer à lui trouver un titre plus classique que celui de *Rhizome :* votre éditeur, aussi bienveillant soit-il à votre égard, aurait probablement du mal à s'y résoudre, quand *Reprise* eût été plus vrai, tout en se départissant de cette obscurité à laquelle on attache encore trop de prix.

Vous me permettrez ensuite, cher ami, de vous faire part d'une inquiétude plus générale. Je ne m'autorise pour cela que de ma propre

expérience, et des réactions hostiles qu'ont pu susciter, naguère, certains de mes ouvrages. Que n'a-t-on pu dire à propos de l'absence de plan de mon livre ? C'est à croire que les gens ne prennent pas la peine de lire, et se contentent des résumés qu'ils trouvent dans la presse.

Un quart dit fff. . . Les autres se détournent des œuvres véritables pour mettre sur un piédestal ces nains de la pensée autoproclamés «nouveaux philosophes». Je pense pour mon compte que vous êtes parvenus à initier un style nouveau en philosophie : vos phrases projetées sur un écran diapré intérieur, cette écriture faite vision se savoure bouche bée, gaiement ; le beau cuir tanné de votre œuvre salamandre traverse le feu sans se brûler et le grand air qu'on respire en vous lisant est celui d'un premier amour, aussi peu tenable que soit l'illusion selon laquelle les amours ne seraient pas prisonnières du désert.

Je n'ai guère de doute sur votre capacité à le faire entendre à vos lecteurs, comme vous l'aviez fait autrefois, et si clairement, dans l'étude que vous aviez eu l'amabilité de consacrer à mon œuvre. En relisant ces dernières pages si neuves sur le narrateur de mon livre, que vous comparez à une «araignée», il m'a semblé, mon cher ami, que toute votre œuvre, différence, répétition, devenirs, ritournelles et déterritorialisation, oui, toute votre œuvre, sortait tout entière de la mienne comme d'une tasse de thé, *pli selon pli*, à la façon de ces papiers japonais que votre collègue Barthes aime tant, ou alors comme la totalité non totalisée de la multitude des transversales parties de mes «deux côtés».

En attendant votre traité d'un empirisme radical en philosophie, j'ai été fort amusé d'apprendre que vous projetiez d'écrire un livre sur le cinéma, et plus encore que vous comptiez m'y associer, quoique très indirectement, en y reprenant la théorie des images que mon cousin par alliance proposa naguère dans *Matière et mémoire*. Vous savez que mon état de santé et l'accomplissement de mon œuvre ont proscrit depuis longtemps tout divertissement et que je n'ai pas beaucoup suivi les développements de cette foirade pour rien que nous appelions autrefois le «cinématographe». Si j'ai pu en parler dans mon livre, ce n'était qu'au point de vue du déroulement cinématographique des choses, qui me paraissait alors tout contraire à la vision de l'artiste, mais l'œuvre capitalissime de M. Feuillade a, depuis, donné un tour complètement nouveau à ma pensée-cinéma. J'espère que vous trouverez bientôt le temps d'écrire ce livre, dont le sujet m'enchante et m'intrigue à la fois.

Croyez, cher Deleuze, à l'expression de ma reconnaissance émue et de ma vive affection,

M.P.

3) Excerpts of MP 010569D

Dear Monsieur [[~~Unnamable~~],

[. . .]

I am moved beyond convenance to read in your last letter that what you always felt deepest, in my work, was the narrator's anxiety in the cab on his way home from the party.

You wrote me in French; I reply in English: aren't French and English the same language? Besides, isn't the task of the writer to work out a foreign language within his native tongue? And aren't beautiful books written in a kind of foreign language?

[. . .]

Albertine Groscul, *Waiting for Dildo* (and so much for such ill-sorted couples as Badonk & Adonk, Bing & Skank, Mercy & Cameo, or Snake & Scratch): such derogatory, off-the-cuff sentences and expressions as these ones make me blush and tremble; yet they are perhaps truer than many a high-minded idolatry.

As for your lean, albeit wondrously rich study, it is full of misreadings, but I have found them all beautiful. For instance, what you call my romanticism is folded into a higher classicism, one that has not yet been understood by my readers, because too short an interval has lapsed since the publication of my work. My classical bent harks back first and foremost to seventeenth-century authors, and I will confess to you that the Vivonne river was named after Catherine de Vivonne, the Marquise de Rambouillet, who spearheaded the *préciosité* movement in her Salon, convening weekly at her eponymous Hôtel under the reign of Louis XIII.

You have not been immune either to the over-aestheticizing of my work, and you perhaps dwelt too heavily on involuntary memory as a matrix of my book, peddling fluffing *pensées* [thoughts] that would fly out into the Hôtel cobwebs, not unlike intoxicated little birds. You are right, however, to point out that the logic of my novel, should you be so generous as to acknowledge one, could not be further removed from the dialectic, which, as has been shown by my dear cousin by alliance Bergson in *La Pensée et le mouvant*, is characterized by two simultaneous models, conversation between friends, and the conventional meaning of

words. For indeed friendship and conversation are but doxologies that are transversed through and ultimately superseded in my work.

In your letter you complain about your fatigue. For my part, tired does not quite even start to describe my current condition. The reality is, I am exhausted. And exhausted is so much more than tired; a tired man has exhausted the powers of achievement, whereas the exhausted has exhausted every possibility of the possible. I am, against all conventional wisdom, not the narrator of my work; yet so often, not unlike his bouts of discouragement have I said to myself: 'I must go on. I can't go on' before, albeit too intermittently, exerting to add: 'I will go on'.

How moving in my weariness to encounter your portrait of the artist as a blushing dorquette; her overcoming the pities of the plain and joining up with a mate as two legglegels in bloom, gives me joy.

[. . .]

You compare the narrator of my book with Charlot, but I have not seen *Les Temps modernes*. I am much intrigued by your project of a film starring Buster Keaton, not least by the character of the flying bedeau [verger] hovering over the Bodleian, unless you should decide to shoot it all on location at Cape Worse.

[. . .]

You wrote me that man does not travel for travel's sake, and that there are limits to man's tomfoolery; I would reply that the true dreamer is the one who travels on the spot to verify that things are there, not unlike the narrator of my book desiring the Carpaccios in Venice.

Like many an otherwise able and perceptive commentator of my work, you appear to have inflated the influence Schopenhauer exercised over it; this holds true as well of the prophet of that most overrated passion, friendship, with whose thought the character of Robert de Saint-Loup is smitten in my work, but I shall not dwell on the nincompoop who committed *The Birth of Tragedy* . . . Yet you read with utmost acuteness how music and literature folded one another in my aesthetics and your remarks on my 'punctuation of dehiscence' shed new light on inversion as a structuring trope in my work, pointing perhaps to what another promising young scholar has labeled 'Charlusian hermeneutics.'

It would be my very great pleasure if, during your next Parisian sojourn, you would consider joining an intimate party at my abode for a private performance of the admirable Quatuor Capet in the last string quartets by Beethoven, *la musique que je préfère au monde* [the music I prefer most in the world], and which itself is a world that opens up other possible worlds. I can already hear you whisper in your beautiful French '*cela doit-il être ?*' [Must it be?]. Yes – it must be – and by all means stand assured

that Céleste, my incomparable maid, will see to it that we order a bottle of your cherished Jameson.

Same old song, from the little band to the last band, in one word, intensities.

Time passes, that is all; make sense who may – I switch off.

M. P.

Notes

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2. This, and other illegible passages, have been omitted from the selected excerpts.

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